

3rd Sunday of Advent Year B 13th December 2020

PARISH BULLETIN

St Macartan's Catholic Parish



4 Drake St, Mornington VIC 3931

Parish Office: Tuesday to Friday 9am to 4pm; Ph: 5975 2200

Email: mornington@cam.org.au **Web:** stmacartansparish.com.au

Parish Priest: Rev. Fr Geoffrey McIlroy

Parish Secretary: Theresa Collard



WE'RE BACK!!!!

All regular Mass times!

Weekdays: Tues-Sat 9:15am

Saturday: Vigil 6pm.

Sunday: 9am, 11am & 5pm

RECONCILIATION:

After 9:15am Mass, Wednesday & Saturdays

Upcoming Holy Days:

Monday 14th Dec: St John of the Cross, Priest, Doctor

Video Sunday Mass

On Line found on Parish's YouTube page: (Ctrl and enter) on this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW8lyzEMe20DLyOppts0Fw/videos>

Also view our Parish website:

<https://www.stmacartansparish.com.au/>

Office Hours:

Tuesday to Friday 9am - 4pm

Phone: 5975 2200

Email: mornington@cam.org.au

Parish Contact Details

St Macartan's Primary School

Ph: 5979 9200

Principal: Colleen McGreal

Deputy: Philip Hills, Kathleen Ronchi

Padua College Ph: 5976 0100

Parish Pastoral Council: Bernard Butler
0419 427 408

Finance Committee: Frank Crea
0417 104 041

Child Safety Officer: Carmel McGrath
0400 076 067 Email:

Mornington.childsafety@cam.org.au

AV Technical: Graeme Wilson

Email: gpw611@bigpond.com

St Mac's High Spirits - Faye Melhem

Email: stmacshighspirits@gmail.com

Parish Caretaker & Memorial Wall: John Spaziani: 0419 598 911

Music & Wedding Co-Ordinator-
Veronica Ryan 0418 358 213.

Email vronicaryan2250@outlook.com

Marriage & Counselling: Charmaine Holmes
5977 2567

Marriage Prep: See Fr Geoff

Baptism Preparation: Kathy Raccanello

Next Baptismal Meeting - 3rd Feb 8 pm Via Zoom

All Baptisms: Contact Parish Office

Anniversaries: Salvatore Crea, Alexandra Presniakovas and John Robinson

Mass Intentions

Pray for the sick and their Carers: Janet Smyth, Tony Ryan, Sue Hale, Graham Oliver, Laura Castelow, Julie Nash, Margaret O'Connor, Jay Keogh, Sophie Davidson, Cinzia Caboche, Robert Warne, Dean Pratt, Trent Wilkinson, Esma Murphy, Kate Maree Ayoub (Tunks) Frances McLean, Richard Meech, Colleen, Noah Guest, Carly Guy, , Elizabeth Brennan, Bob Barrett, Ally Roe, Colleen & Jim Husin, Maryanne Husin, Eileen Young, Peter Hingston, Dave Mortby, Lynne Anderson, Naomi Andrews, Peter Atkinson, Kevin Paganoni, Jeannie Fox, Phyllis Molloy, Renee Barker, Courtney Stevens, Joseph Aquilina, Helen & Denis Chambers, Mark Allan, Lucas Pingiaro, Fernando Pineda, Jim Kershaw (NZ), Maureen Spargo, Tony Formosa, John Mahony, Terry Smyth, Torquil Hansen, Betty Corke, **And especially for Ruben Pateman.**

First Reading Is 61:1-2. 10-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.

'I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation, he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity, like a bridegroom wearing his wreath, like a bride adorned in her jewels. 'For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seeds spring up, so will the Lord make both integrity and praise spring up in the sight of the nations.'

Responsorial Psalm

(R.) My soul rejoices in my God.

My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her nothingness; henceforth all ages will call me blessed. (R.)

The Almighty works marvels for me. Holy his name! His mercy is from age to age, on those who fear him. (R.)

He fills the starving with good things, sends the rich away empty. He protects Israel, his servant, remembering his mercy. (R.)

Second Reading 1 Thes 5:16-24

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.
Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything – hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.
May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

Gospel Acclamation Is 61:1 (Lk 4:18)

Alleluia, alleluia!
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;
he sent me to bring Good News to the poor
Alleluia!

Gospel Jn 1:6-8. 19-28

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light. This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they asked, 'are you Elijah?' 'I am not,' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied:
a voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight way for the Lord.'
Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

Communion Antiphon Cf. Is 35:4

Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear.
Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.



Have you thought?

A time to Rejoice!

This Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent is traditionally known as Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete is the Latin word for Rejoice! Advent was originally celebrated as a five week season and with the same fasting and penitential nature as the season of Lent. The third Sunday, Gaudete, was like a break for rejoicing in the midst of the fasting. When Advent was reduced to four weeks and the nature of the season altered, Gaudete Sunday was retained. The colour of this Sunday is rose – a celebratory colour – and it is reflected in the vestments worn by the priest and in the colour of the third candle used in Advent wreaths.

EXPLORING THE WORD

In contrast to last week's text on John the Baptist, this one comes from the last of the written gospels. The Gospel of John was penned at the very end of the first century. One common characteristic, however, is clear: the Baptist is again presented as the forerunner. John the Baptist rejects all messianic or quasimessianic titles. He throws human expectation into chaos. He claims for himself only the role of the 'voice' of Isaiah 40, but the evangelist presents him as the most reliable of witnesses, 'Sent by God ... to speak for the light'. The only other person in John's Gospel to come from God is Jesus himself. Before an audience of the leaders of the religion of Israel, John witnesses with an authority and a truthfulness that has its

source in God.

- In what ways can you speak with authority about Jesus?
- What truths have you come to recognise about Jesus?
- How do you give witness to Christ?

DID YOU KNOW?

In the early years, there was rivalry between the disciples of John the Baptist and of Jesus. This gospel makes it clear that John does not see himself as a rival to Jesus but as a witness to him. It is Jesus who is the one sent from God.

- The quote from Isaiah comes from a section of his book that is addressed to the people in exile in Babylon in the sixth century bc. It is designed to bring comfort, and promises that when the paths are made straight, the Lord will be revealed.
- Bethany, as mentioned in this gospel text, is not the same town that was home to Mary, Martha and Lazarus. They lived close to Jerusalem, but the Bethany mentioned here lies on the east bank of the Jordan River.

DID YOU ALSO KNOW?

I have recently been asked to assist St Thomas Mores Mt Eliza with Mass supply, in preparation for a new Priest beginning at Mt Eliza in early January.

Fr Joe Danh Truong has been appointed as Chaplain of the Royal Melbourne, Peter MacCallum, Royal Women's and Royal Children's Hospitals.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Fr Joe for his friendship while here in the Peninsular, I have always found him to be a holy priest and a really nice guy. I will very much miss him and I wish him all the best and know he will be excellent in his new role - my prayers are with you Joe.

Blessings

Fr Geoff

PS - As I will be doing some Masses at Mt Eliza, Fr Laurie Pearson will be presiding at some masses here: Sat 6pm 19th & 26th Dec and Sat 6pm on 2nd Jan.

SHARING THE TRADITION

A closer look at the Scripture of the day, to see how it makes more explicit God's word to us through the teachings of Jesus Christ

The church is inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, and one of the ways we can encounter the work of the Spirit is 'in the witness of saints through whom he manifests his holiness and continues the work of salvation' (CCC, §688). From the church, a believer can 'learn the example of holiness and recognise its models', especially in 'the spiritual tradition and long history of the saints' (CCC, §2030), who have given witness to Jesus, just as John the Baptist did.

- Ask the catechumens about their knowledge of the saints. Are there particular saints they are familiar with? Perhaps your parish bears the name of a saint.
- Tell the stories of various saints and the ways they gave witness to their faith.
- Do you have images of saints in your church or other community buildings? Explore these.
- If catechumens were to adopt the name of a saint, whom would they choose and why? This could be a task to research over the coming week.

SYMBOLS AND IMAGES

Light has become a synonym for Christ, who refers to himself as the light of the world (John 8:12). Thus the presence of Jesus is often symbolized by a lighted candle. This symbolism has a particular resonance during Advent.

LIVING THE WORD

Practical ideas to employ in connecting Scripture and daily life.

- In what ways does your community give witness to Jesus both by word and action? You could invite one or two people from your community to share their experiences of giving witness to their faith in their daily life.
- Light the third Advent candle. Pray for all those who work to bring good news to the poor and who bind up hearts that are broken. Conclude with the prayer of exorcism in the RCIA at §94H. Alternatively, you could use the blessing from today's second reading, from Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians: May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

COVID-19: AND ST MACARTAN'S?

Hi All,

Well all masses are back, no bookings and we are now allowed 1 person per 2sqm with each person 1.5m apart (social distancing). This means some pews are still taped off and still only 3 adults per pew, unless you are a family, which can sit together. But we can now fit 133 in church.

During the week:

Doors to the Church are open early as they used to be, so feel free to enter and pray but you must still sanitise and sign in or QR Code phone scan in. The seats need sanitising after each Mass so stay and help if you can?

Weekend Masses:

Because numbers are bigger, there will be a Mass usher, who will be counting people in the Church and when maximum number reached the Church doors will be closed. Again it is compulsory to sign in or QR phone Code register and sanitise hands plus KEEP MASKS ON! Yes, as you will in a larger number and amongst strangers for a prolonged period of time you are to keep masks on inside the church. Again, we need people to assist in sanitising pews after Mass, please help if you can?

For **WEEKDAY & WEEKEND Masses**: NO bookings - First 133

XMAS MASSES - See following page

Note: We are trying two outdoor Xmas Eve Masses, so as we can celebrate with as many of you as possible, as the tight restrictions on indoor services, limit us too much. We are preparing for 500 at each outdoor Mass BUT they are weather dependant. If too wet, windy or hot, they will be cancelled and move indoors with restricted numbers. We apologise in advance so if you are coming and it is forecast to rain, have a gale warning or be >35C expect it to be cancelled.

Parking will not be available in Church back car park for these outdoor services, so be prepared to park elsewhere and walk, or share a ride. There will be a drop off area for disabled and limited disabled parking. Chairs and or blankets would be an advantage to bring, with only limited chairs available.

Children coming to either the 5pm or 7:30pm Masses are encouraged to dress up as traditional Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, Stars, Angels, Manger Animals etc. And take part in the procession and the liturgy, with two live donkeys - true!

All outdoor masses follow a COVID-19 plan, have marshals/attendants, child safety officers and the plan has been reviewed and approved by the Police.

Let us celebrate this Nativity, joyfully and have some fun.

Blessings
Fr Geoff

St Macartan's Christmas Masses 2020



24th December **Outside Masses**

5pm Children's Mass

Book via Trybooking <https://www.trybooking.com/BNINI>
(BYO chair/blanket)

7.30pm Family Mass

Book via Trybooking <https://www.trybooking.com/BNINM>
(BYO Chair/blanket)

In the event of inclement weather these outdoor "Christmas Eve Masses" will be cancelled, and a small number invited into the Church.

Inside Masses

No Bookings required for these below:

11.00pm Christmas Evening Mass

25th December Xmas Day

8.30am

10.30am





St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal 2020



There will be a collection for St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal after each Mass this weekend, there is a donation box beside the 1st and 2nd Collection Boxes, marked St Vinnies.

No Food or Drink Permitted.

Please give generously for those in need this Christmas.

Every Monday Evening at 8pm

**The Holy Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet
are prayed In the Church.**

All Welcome.



BLUE CHRISTMAS

The holidays can be difficult when you are missing someone. It can feel like the whole world is happy and you alone are grieving. Blue Christmas is a time of remembrance, comfort and hope. There will be quiet music, prayers, readings and an acknowledgement of those we have lost. This will be followed by coffee, cake and an opportunity to share with others who are feeling 'blue' around Christmas time. Remember...You are not alone this Christmas.

BYO chair or picnic rug and a photo of your loved one to display for the evening

SUNDAY DEC 20th at 8.30pm
Beauty Park, Frankston

This event is supported by Chasing Change, Frankston City Council and Support After Suicide
For more information go to <https://www.facebook.com/Chasingchangespn/>


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PIKTOCHART



CAROLS BY HEADLIGHTS!!

A wide range of local organisations have been working hard to bring us "Carols by Headlights" at Dromana Drive-in on 21st, 22nd and 23rd December from 9pm-11pm. Gates open at 6pm. Tickets are free, but booking are essential at

www.trybooking.com/687402.



Give a Gift this Christmas

Christmas should be a joyous occasion for us all. However, there are many families in our local community for whom it is a very stressful time, especially those who are unable to afford gifts for their children.

Mornington Community Information and Support Centre, with the support of a range of local churches, organisations and businesses, run a Present Roo or families who have children on their parent's Health Care Card and who are struggling financially. Last year the program gave out 345 major presents to children who otherwise may have missed out at Christmas.

You can help by donating a gift. We invite you to donate an unwrapped toy or book for a child under 16 years (please no soft or stuffed toys). We have found that teenagers love a gift card or voucher.

You can drop them off at the Centre, 320 Main St Mornington from 23rd November to 11th December.

CHILD SAFETY NEWS

Dear Parishioners, as the year of zoom meetings comes to an end and plans for the new year are being made, the Child Safety Committee is beginning to organize information meetings where volunteers will be invited to attend. These information meetings will focus on our Code of Conduct & the declaration that each volunteer will need to sign.

Our parish website has these documents available as well as our Child Safety Policy & our Statement of Commitment.

Dates & Invitations will be advertised in the newsletter & through the ministry teams,
From Carmel McGrath

Carmel McGrath - St Macartan's Child Safety Officer
Mornington.ChildSafety@cam.org.au



Pope Francis

proclaims

“Year of St Joseph”

With the Apostolic Letter “Patris corde” (“With a Father’s Heart”), Pope Francis recalls the 150th anniversary of the declaration of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. To mark the occasion, the Holy Father has proclaimed a “Year of Saint Joseph” from, 8 December 2020, to 8 December 2021.

In a new Apostolic Letter entitled *Patris corde* (“With a Father’s Heart”), Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows. The Letter marks the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX’s declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. To celebrate the anniversary, Pope Francis has proclaimed a special “Year of St Joseph,” beginning on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception 2020 and extending to the same feast in 2021. The Holy Father wrote *Patris corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of “ordinary” people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, “the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence,” who nonetheless played “an incomparable role in the history of salvation.”

A beloved, tender, obedient father

Saint Joseph, in fact, “concretely expressed his fatherhood” by making an offering of himself in love “a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home,” writes Pope Francis, quoting his predecessor St Paul VI.

And because of his role at “the crossroads between the Old and New Testament,” St Joseph “has always been venerated as a father by the Christian people”. In him, “Jesus saw the tender love of God,” the one that helps us accept our weakness, because “it is through” and despite “our fears, our frailties, and our weakness” that most divine designs are realized. “Only tender love will save us from the snares of the accuser,” emphasizes the Pontiff, and it is by encountering God’s mercy especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation that we “experience His truth and tenderness,” – because “we know that God’s truth does not condemn us, but instead welcomes, embraces, sustains and forgives us”. Joseph is also a father in obedience to God: with his ‘fiat’ he protects Mary and Jesus and teaches his Son to “do the will of the Father.” Called by God to serve the mission of Jesus, he “cooperated... in the great mystery of Redemption,” as St John Paul II said, “and is truly a minister of salvation”.

Welcoming the will of God

At the same time, Joseph is “an accepting Father,” because he “accepted Mary unconditionally” — an important gesture even today, says Pope Francis, “in our world where psychological, verbal and physical violence towards women is so evident.” But the Bridegroom of Mary is also the one who, trusting in the Lord, accepts in his life even the events that he does not understand, “setting aside his own ideas” and reconciling himself with his own history. Joseph’s spiritual path “is not one that explains, but accepts” — which does not mean that he is “resigned.” Instead, he is “courageously and firmly proactive,” because with “Holy Spirit’s gift of fortitude,” and full of hope, he is able “to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments.” In practice, through St. Joseph, it is as if God were to repeat to us: “Do not be afraid!” because “faith gives meaning to every event, however happy or sad,” and makes us aware that “God can make flowers spring up from stony ground.” Joseph “did not look for shortcuts but confronted reality with open eyes and accepted personal responsibility for it.” For this reason, “he encourages us to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and to show special concern for the weak”.

P2: Continued - Pope Francis proclaims "Year of St Joseph"

A creatively courageous father, example of love

Patris corde highlights "the creative courage" of St. Joseph, which "emerges especially in the way we deal with difficulties." "The carpenter of Nazareth," explains the Pope, was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting in divine providence." He had to deal with "the concrete problems" his Family faced, problems faced by other families in the world, and especially those of migrants. In this sense, St. Joseph is "the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty." As the guardian of Jesus and Mary, Joseph cannot "be other than the guardian of the Church," of her motherhood, and of the Body of Christ. "Consequently, every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is 'the child' whom Joseph continues to protect." From St Joseph, writes Pope Francis, "we must learn... to love the Church and the poor".

A father who teaches the value, dignity and joy of work

"A carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family," St Joseph also teaches us "the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one's own labour." This aspect of Joseph's character provides Pope Francis the opportunity to launch an appeal in favour of work, which has become "a burning social issue" even in countries with a certain level of well-being. "there is a renewed need to appreciate the importance of dignified work, of which Saint Joseph is an exemplary patron," the Pope writes. Work, he says, "is a means of participating in the work of salvation, an opportunity to hasten the coming of the Kingdom, to develop our talents and abilities, and to put them at the service of society and fraternal communion." Those who work, he explains, "are cooperating with God himself, and in some way become creators of the world around us." Pope Francis encourages everyone "to rediscover the value, the importance and the necessity of work for bringing about a new 'normal' from which no one is excluded." Especially in light of rising unemployment due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Pope calls everyone to "review our priorities" and to express our firm conviction that no young person, no person at all, no family should be without work!".

A father "in the shadows," centred on Mary and Jesus

Taking a cue from *The Shadow of the Father* — a book by Polish writer Jan Dobraczyński — Pope Francis describes Joseph's fatherhood of Jesus as "the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father." "Fathers are not born, but made," says Pope Francis. "A man does not become a father simply by bringing a child into the world, but by taking up the responsibility to care for that child." Unfortunately, in today's society, children "often seem orphans, lacking fathers" who are able to introduce them "to life and reality." Children, the Pope says, need fathers who will not try to dominate them, but instead raise them to be "capable of deciding for themselves, enjoying freedom and exploring new possibilities." This is the sense in which St Joseph is described as a "most chaste" father, which is the opposite of domineering possessiveness. Joseph, says Pope Francis, "knew how to love with extraordinary freedom. He never made himself the centre of things. He did not think of himself, but focused instead on the lives of Mary and Jesus." Happiness for Joseph involved a true gift of self: "In him, we never see frustration, but only trust," writes Pope Francis. "His patient silence was the prelude to concrete expressions of trust." Joseph stands out, therefore, as an exemplary figure for our time, in a world that "needs fathers," and not "tyrants"; a society that "rejects those who confuse authority with authoritarianism, service with servility, discussion with oppression, charity with a welfare mentality, power with destruction." True fathers, instead, "refuse to live the lives of their children for them," and instead respect their freedom. In this sense, says Pope Francis, a father realizes that "he is most a father and an educator at the point when he becomes 'useless,' when he sees that his child has become independent and can walk the paths of life unaccompanied." Being a father, the Pope emphasizes, "has nothing to do with possession, but is rather a 'sign' pointing to a greater fatherhood": that of the "heavenly Father".

A daily prayer to St Joseph... and a challenge

In his letter, Pope Francis notes how, "Every day, for over forty years, following Lauds [Morning Prayer]" he has "recited a prayer to Saint Joseph taken from a nineteenth-century French prayer book of the Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary." This prayer, he says, expresses devotion and trust, and even poses a certain challenge to Saint Joseph," on account of its closing words: "My beloved father, all my trust is in you. Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain, and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary, show me that your goodness is as great as your power."

At the conclusion of his Letter, he adds another prayer to St Joseph, which he encourages all of us to pray together:

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.

Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage,
and defend us from every evil.
Amen.



Aged Care Visitations

Dear parishioners and residence at Nursing homes and Aged care facilities.
Due to Covid restrictions and strict Government rules, we were unable to continue our visitations during 2020.

Protecting our elderly was our main priority.

We will keep you informed when we will be resuming in 2021.

On behalf of Father Geoff, The Visitation Team and all at St. Macartans We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

St Mac's - POETS CORNER

*Have you got something to say, that's said in a nice poetical way.
That's kind and uplifting, or spiritual and Christian.*
You maybe a Poet and just don't know it - Just send it in and we'll see?



Piety Stall

I know we have had it tough the last few months, but we are blessed to live in Australia , probably the safest place to be right now.

I'm excited that we can now open the Gift Shop and be there to assist you with any purchases you wish to make whether it be for Christmas, Confirmation or just a small gift for a friend or loved one.

Due to entering the Church by one door and leaving by another, the Gift Shop, for now, will only be opening 30 minutes before each Mass is due to commence, so drop in on your way into Mass as it will be closed at the end of each Mass.

Anyone who would like to Volunteer to work in the Gift Shop for half an hour one Sunday in the Month, Please let me know. We have had a few resignations during Covid.

I can be contacted on 0425 749 379

Regards Trish and Graham Thomas.

HIGH SPIRITS

(Catechism for State School children)

Confirmation 9 Children Sunday 13th December 5pm

stmacshighspirits@gmail.com



St Macartan's Parishioners Photo Display



PLEASE SEND IN YOUR PHOTO

The photos will then be included at the start of our Video Mass

Take a selfie and then e-mail it to our Parish Office at—

mornington@cam.org.au

5 December 2020

All Clergy,
Archdiocese of Melbourne

Dear Bishops, Fathers and Deacons,

My prayerful greetings to you in this Season of Advent, and on this joyful day of ordinations to the priesthood. Please keep Jude, Simeon, James and Jude Thaddeus in your prayers. You may have seen a bill, quietly tabled by the State Government last week, called the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill 2020.

<https://content.legislation.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/bills/591143bi1.pdf>
<https://content.legislation.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/bills/591143exi1.pdf>

With scant consultation over the past twelve months, and little discussion in recent weeks, the bill was tabled without religious communities having the opportunity to see exactly what was being proposed, and to be frank, it raises serious concerns and questions.

The basic problem is not the announced intention, which appears to be about preventing harmful and coercive practices that would damage human dignity. This I would support. The problem however, is the content of the bill itself and its explanatory memorandum (links above), which looks like a dramatic over-reach of the state into the contexts of prayer, conversion, pastoral conversation, spiritual accompaniment, family life and the freedom of individuals to change and to seek advice and direction of their own choosing to make their own decisions.

Since the bill was made public I have given some time to reading and understanding it, and have sought a range of advice. While more consideration will need to be given to it, I have to be clear with you that I oppose this bill as it currently stands. It is expected that the bill will be debated and brought to pass in the lower house as early as next week, and brought back to the upper house early next year.

Can you please make your own people aware of the bill and its possible implications, and encourage them to phone their local Member of Parliament to express their view. Because the bill has not been widely publicised, many parents and families, clergy and people of faith are currently unaware of the contents of this proposed legislation, which might have a chilling effect on the ability of Victorian people of faith to express a view, share their faith, or talk about biblical teaching without fear of state interference.

In fact, the ultimate outcome of this bill may not actually be to protect anyone who is vulnerable, but to silence people of faith from expressing their view.

If outstanding questions can be answered comprehensively, and time given to public debate and discussion, it is possible such concerns could be resolved, but in the meanwhile I will give some public attention to this issue, alongside other faith leaders. Attached to this letter is a set of unresolved questions legislators in Victoria ought to be able to answer. You may wish to use these as discussion points with your people, and as points they might raise in their conversations with local Members.

I am pleased for you to circulate this letter and pray we can find a fair and equitable approach to this issue, strangely appearing just weeks before the celebration of Christmas.

Yours fraternally in Christ Jesus,

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne

Unresolved questions regarding the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill 2020:

- On what basis can the government propose legislation that directly impacts on 'conversion' (a normal and everyday practice for Christians and others) or prayer?
- The bill imposes restrictions on what people can and cannot say to one another, even if they are adults of a shared cultural or religious identity. How is this not harmful to free speech in a liberal democracy?
- In the Catholic context, we value chastity for everyone, and we invite some to celibacy. The bill is so broad and vague in its definitions that in both categories people could now be criminally liable for showing restraint and self-control in their relationships and sexuality. Is this really the intent of the government?
- Christian leaders are expected to model good behaviour and leadership in their religious context of the people they teach, form, and serve. Will encouraging self-restraint among those leaders and staff now be a criminal offence?
- If a married adult is struggling with their sexuality and asks a priest to pray for them and bless them so they can keep sexual expression to their marriage, are they now performing a 'change or suppression practice'?
- The Bible calls for conversion and for sexual abstinence on occasion, as well as restriction of sexual activity to marriage only. Will showing someone the relevant passages in the bible now be a 'change or suppression practice'?
- A pre-pubescent child requests hormonal treatment and preparations for gender-reassignment surgery, but their parents, who know and love that child with great care and devotion, encourage he or she to 'wait' and be patient, and see how they feel after a few years of maturity and growth. Are those parents now embarking on a 'change or suppression practice'?
- Sexual identity is one of a number of ways for a person to understand and explain their personal identity, which is often complex and changes over time. For people of faith, their religious identity is far more important. For those wishing to curtail their sexual behaviour in line with their religious identity as a priority, and they seek counselling and pastoral help to achieve this, how are they not conducting a 'change or suppression practice' according to the bill?
- Catholic schools in Melbourne and elsewhere have strict and robust policies to protect individuals in situations in which a student identifies as transgender. This bill interrupts policies of safety and empowerment by forcing restrictions on what can and cannot be encouraged in normal pastoral practice. How can we be asked to support a bill that might cause further harm to children facing gender dysphoria who, according to science and therapeutic experience need less pressure, more time and space, and room to develop through adolescence as they shape their identity? They need support, not a forced lockdown into their identity at some fixed point of time.
- Pressures to enact hormonal treatment and surgery in adolescence can cause long-term harm that is regretted in later life. Forcing parents and carers from being able to offer children alternative options for their care and wellbeing is irresponsible.

Hello all,

I will be writing to our Local Member of Parliament and others and encourage you to maybe set up a petition, which I will then include with my letters.

Do the lay know, that it is the Holy Spirit that does conversions - not us.

Let's pray the spirit works upon the law makers - and quickly!

Fr Geoff