

## A Word from Fr John

As we make our way through this journey of challenge and unprecedented times, we make it in the spirit of faith.

To live in faith is about moving from the known to the unknown believing that we are loved and not alone. Whatever suffering or fear befall us, we are raised in faith as we face the challenges of what is before us and we trust that we will be ultimately raised fully.

We are raised as one whose faith breaks through when we admit our fears and anxieties to the heart of our God.

As a Church, we are not a building and we are more than an institution in the world. The Church at its deepest identity is a sign of the mystery of the risen Jesus connecting us spiritually.

Though we cannot gather socially, we have our online connection and we have our prayer to we connect in the Spirit. Our desire for one another to find our way through this most distressing time is held in that Spirit.

Let us continue to care for our fears and our anxieties to our God and one another. We are only a phone call from each another. Be assured of Parish leadership support, please contact myself, or Christine or Jane in the Parish Office (tel. 9531 6120) or via our website.

We are trying to do helpful things and normalise our lives in an abnormal situation. Last week, we recorded our mass online. This is so our parishioners can participate in a mass within an environment that is familiar to them, with their parish priest and others who are familiar. Our first attempt was a little awkward and we had some sound problems but it was quite a good start into online worship and feedback from people who logged on was one of overwhelming joy and comfort. As time goes on, the technical quality will improve.

Let us look for ways in which we can promote the goodness of life as life is threatened by this virus. Let us share helpful ways of coping in isolation. We will be putting up inspirational material on our website and invite you to log in regularly.

Know that I, as your parish priest, hold you in my prayers and let us hold one another in solidarity of faith. I extend the invitation to you to light a candle daily at home, gather for a few minutes and pray for one another, and for our world.

Let us pray from our hearts asking that God's spirit will work through us for each other and for the world.

End these few minutes with *The Lord's Prayer* or *The Hail Mary*, and even the Pandemic prayer, found below (and on our website).

Let us stay together in the heart of our God whose care never leaves us.

Fr John  
27 March 2020

**Editor's note:** For those who are on the internet go to our website ([www.shscparish.org.au](http://www.shscparish.org.au)) for updates, prayers, registration for giving assistance, for asking for assistance, or to leave a message.

We also recognise that, at this time, many are in financial hardship but if you are in a position to continue with your weekly donations, this would be of great assistance to our parish in maintaining our ministries and covering costs. You can give through the *Tithely* App on our website, through direct debit into our bank account, or even popping your envelopes into the front door letterbox, found at the bottom of the front door.

Further, if you know any parishioner who does not have internet, please let us know so we can, at least, do a newsletter drop into their post-box.

### **Prayer for a Pandemic**

By Cameron Bellm, The Celtic Christian Tradition

May we who are merely inconvenienced  
remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors  
remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home  
remember those who must choose  
between their health and making the rent.

May we have flexibility to care for our children  
when the schools close.

Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips  
remember those who have no place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money  
in the turmoil of the economic market  
remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for quarantine at home  
remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country.  
let us choose love during this time  
when we cannot physically wrap our arms  
around each other,  
let us find ways to be the loving embrace  
of God to our neighbour.  
Amen.