FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Isaiah 55:10-11

Thus says the Lord:
‘As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.’

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

R/. The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

SECOND READING

A reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Romans 8:18-23

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

The Word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower; all who come to him will live for ever.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL READING

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (Shorter form) Mt 13:1-9

Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach, and he told them many things in parables.

He said, ‘Imagine a sower going out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came upon them they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears!’

The Gospel of the Lord.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH

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15th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A
11th/12th July, 2020
Sea Sunday (Apostleship of the Sea)

God of all that exists,
plant Your Word in our hearts,
and may it take root
and grow there.
We want to be Your good soil,
producing a harvest of kindness
and love, so leading others to find you
and give themselves to You.
We make this prayer through
Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FOCUS ON THE READINGS

The teaching of Jesus is grounded firmly in the Jewish world of the 1st Century. For most of his listeners, that world was an agricultural one and so the stories Jesus told were about the everyday realities of peoples’ lives. He told stories about vineyards, wheat fields, building houses, planting seeds and reaping harvests. The imagery he used was drawn from the lived experience of those he taught. Jesus used a style of storytelling that was popular at the time: parable. A parable is a story with a moral or a lesson. A parable usually involves an extended metaphor and, at its heart, is teaching the listener about how to live or how to behave. Another feature of parables is that they can be understood at different levels. At one level, there is the literal meaning of a parable – what it says is what it is about. In today’s gospel, the parable of the sower can be read or heard as a literal story about sowing seed and the lesson one might take from it is to be careful where you throw the seed when sowing. At another level, parables have a metaphorical meaning. In this instance, Jesus actually explains the symbolism of the parable to his disciples. There is a further, interpretive level of a parable where a modern reader asks, ‘What has that story got to say to me here and now?’ In his conversation with the disciples, Jesus makes clear that only some people are open to understanding the depth of the message contained within his parables. Some people will only ever hear the story and never hear the message. Mind you, he still has to explain the parable to the disciples! He has just chastised those who fail to understand and yet walks the disciples through the parable step by step! The teaching of the parable of the sower is as true for us today as it was in its original context. The word of the kingdom continues to fall on people who are at various stages of readiness to receive it. What Jesus suggests to his disciples – and to us – is that the ‘good soil’ can’t always be predicted. Jesus doesn’t tell his disciples to only sow the word in people who are receptive. Rather, he wants them – and us – to scatter the word everywhere and to rejoice when it does find good soil and yields a rich harvest.

FEAST DAYS THIS WEEK

Mon 13th July: St Henry
Wed 15th July: St Bonaventure
Thur 16th July Our Lady of Mt Carmel

I have come that you may have life and have it to the full
(John 10:10)

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St. Joseph’s College 9758 2000
Principal: Catherine Livingston
Mater Christi College 9754 6611
Principal: Mary Fitz-Gerald

SICK LIST GUIDELINES – names will remain on the sick list for 6 weeks, then removed, unless notification to continue is received. If you are aware that any names on the sick list that need to be removed, please contact the Parish Office on 9758 1029.

KEEP IN TOUCH: We love to be able to keep in contact with you, especially during these unprecedented times of isolation. Please let us know your current email address or/ and phone number. We are happy to email the bulletin to you! Or check it on our new website!

You are dispensed from your Sunday obligation at this time. At present, Mass is available but in limited places. You may choose to watch the daily Masses that are streamed from several parishes. They are available on the Parish Office’s Facebook page and on the computer in the Parish Office. You may also watch the daily Masses on https://holyfamilydoveton.net.au. Some parishes broadcast their Masses on radio stations, or you can watch Mass on television. You may choose to watch Mass on your computer, or if you don’t have a computer: Mass can also be heard on The Light FM radio station (89.9 FM) at 7am each Sunday morning. Or MASS ON TV: C31 / 44 shows the 11am Sunday Mass at St Patrick’s Cathedral and will continue to be televised free to air. Or Mass For You at Home on Ch10 Sunday at 6am.

PARISH THANKSGIVING/STEWARDSHIP
If you require an annual statement for your contributions to our Thanksgiving/Stewardship Program, please contact the Parish Office via Email or phone to let us know. With lockdown, we cannot distribute them in the usual manner, and it would be great to save on postage costs. Thank you for your generous support to this program.

ST VINCENT de PAUL- Ferntree Gully
SVPD is proud to announce the opening of their re-located Vinnies Op shop:
Unit 7/1821 Ferntree Gully Road, FTG
The opening will be on: Wednesday 15th July 2020.
Due to Stage 3 restrictions please visit during the week as numbers are limited.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE FROM ST VINCENT DE PAUL
As reported earlier, since lockdown we have banked $4,588.28. This week received a further $2,100.00: making a record total of donations $6,688.28. Our heartfelt thanks for your compassion and generosity towards those less fortunate in our area.

SVDP Ferntree Gully Conference
SUPPORTING SEAFARERS: Each year, the Church celebrates Sea Sunday, an opportunity to recognise the important work being done by seafarers across the world. We only have to look around us, in our homes and in our work, to recognise the many commodities that are brought to our shores by cargo ships. In fact, over 95% of global trade is carried by ships. As an island nation, we in Australia are heavily reliant on ships and the commodities they bring to us for our survival. Now in its 100th year, the Stella Maris ministry (Apostleship of the Sea) focuses on the ongoing welfare and pastoral care of seafarers—regardless of their colour or creed. At present, seafarers are stranded on both cargo and cruise vessels all over the world at this time. Thousands of the seafarers have already been onboard working for 14 months straight, way beyond the end of their contract due to closed borders and COVID-19 restrictions. We have heard of a frightening increase in suicides onboard ships. Pope Francis recently sent a message of support to maritime personnel and seafarers, acknowledging their important contributions to the movement of essential goods during this time of the pandemic. ‘Know that you are not alone and that you are not forgotten,’ Pope Francis said. For information on how to support this ministry can be found at the Apostleship of the Sea website or visit their Facebook page.

Hymn Suggestion: Lead me, Lord
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZSL5fT-KU

LATEST COVID 19 UPDATE 07 July 2020
Dear friends in Christ,
Today’s decision to place metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire areas back into Stage 3 lockdown for the next six weeks from 11.59pm Wednesday 8 July is sobering news. It is truly disheartening, and will bring renewed distress to so many families and individuals.
These words from Psalm 22 have come immediately to my mind (words that were on the lips of Jesus as he was crucified): ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ ‘Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?’ O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest. (Ps 22.1-2)
Yet, I want to encourage you in grace, trusting in the abiding closeness of our loving Lord, who promised to be with us always.
In returning to Stage 3 restrictions in those specific areas, sadly the public celebration of Mass, which we have only just re-commenced, will need to go back to live-streaming; churches will need to be closed again to any private prayer; and the numbers allowed for funerals and weddings will be severely limited.
We expect specific details around the restrictions will be released by the civil authorities over the next 24 hours, and will be communicated to you as soon as possible. I ask for your patience in the meantime.
Now is a time for attentiveness to the care of one another. In the face of our own despondency and fears, our fatigue and anxieties, may we learn to hold firm in faith and hope, and experience sustaining moments of love. As the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews encouraged: Let us be concerned for each other, to stir a response in love and good works. (Heb 24.10)
Friends, while the Psalmist knew struggle and pain, there were also words of confidence that encouraged: ‘In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and were not put to shame. In you they trusted, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame. (Ps 22.4-5)
May our Lord Jesus be with you, and may His Blessed Mother accompany us all. With every grace and blessing, I remain, Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus, Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO DURING LOCKDOWN? Knox city council has many offerings on its website including. A trivia Event 16th July, and Fitness -Strength for Life Mon/Fridays For more information see the website: http://www.knox.vic.gov.au/Calendar/Calendar.aspx