



ST PAUL'S

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Bulletin Highlights

Second Sunday of Lent - Year A

8 March 2020

PASTORAL STATEMENT BY BISHOP BRIAN MASCORD
Temporary Mass changes as a result of the increasing risk of coronavirus

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ

As you are aware, the spread of coronavirus, COVID-19, continues to present challenges to health authorities around the world, including here in Australia. As a result of the increased spread of coronavirus and what we know about its transmission, many dioceses around the world and closer to home have temporarily altered certain practices in the Mass to ensure the health and safety of parishioners. With this precedent—and with the wellbeing of all parishioners of our diocese in mind—I am issuing the following directives to all clergy, religious and the lay faithful in the Diocese of Wollongong:

- In those parishes and communities in the diocese where holy Communion is distributed under both kinds, this practice will cease. Communion of the Precious Blood will be for the celebrant only.
- Given that one of the easiest ways to transmit a virus is by the transmission of saliva, Communion will be received only in the hand.
- Clergy and parishioners are not to shake hands during the sign of peace, but should acknowledge each other at the exchange with the words, “Peace be with you.”
- All ministers of Holy Communion (both ordinary and extraordinary) are to use hand sanitisers before the distribution of Holy Communion commences, and are not to physically touch anyone in the act of blessing.
- Holy water fonts are to be emptied or removed.

These directives are informed by the latest advice from the Australian Government Department of Health which states that everyone should practice good hygiene to protect against coronavirus infection, including “avoiding close contact with others, such as touching”. These directives will remain in place until the need for them ceases. We are closely monitoring the situation and will provide further advice as necessary. In the meantime, everyone is encouraged to monitor local and national health advice, and to practice good hygiene, including washing hands often with soap and water. Please join me in praying for all those who have passed away or been affected by coronavirus; for the women and men working tirelessly to care for those affected; and for the development of a vaccine to keep us all safe.

1 THESS 5:18
FOR ALL THINGS GIVE THANKS

Yours in Christ
Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD
BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG



Transfiguration

Sacrament of Penance Programme ~ 2020

Parents are required to indicate their preferences for the Sacrament of Penance Ceremonies that have been scheduled for Tuesday 17th & Thursday 19th March. There are expected to be five priests in attendance at each of the four ceremonies. Please be mindful there are two formats. The first format (Option A) is where parents also celebrate the Sacrament of Penance with their children. The second format (Option B) is where the children alone celebrate the Sacrament and the parents remains virtual spectators. The children will obviously have a better experience of their first confession if they see their parents also attending confession. Accordingly, all families are strongly encouraged to indicate Option A. By this time, all children and parents ought to know the **Act of Contrition** perfectly. And for our final week of workshops, parents are asked to read page 24 and assist their children complete page 25. More news next week. Thanks



Lent Event ~ this year, a Non-Event!

Because of short notice, a decision was taken to axe the proposal for this year's Lent Event. However, there will be most certainly be a Lent Event next year with a special emphasis on Lamb which, since the time of the Passover (c. 1300 BC), has been regarded as an unblemished animal of sacrifice. It's why Jesus has the title 'Lamb of God'. The Advent Event will be held this year on 28 November. It was a wonderful evening last year with a full house. Not to be missed!

Church RE Congress ~ 2020

Father Michael and a local delegation from our Catholic Schools travelled to Anaheim a few weeks ago for a congress that hosted 40,000 people. It was really quite an awesome experience to be among so many people who have such a passionate commitment to God and Church. The congress included a very large variety of workshops that were especially interesting. They covered an enormous range of topics including sacred music. And one topic of considerable interest was how to best respond pastorally to the “nones”. These are the people who are increasingly identifying as having no religion.

The celebrations of Holy Mass were very beautiful and special. Among 40,000 people in such a large arena, the sacred music was of the highest quality. Those in attendance were so very reverent, respectful and prayerful. Didn't see even one person chewing gum.

Interestingly, a day after the congress, our Wollongong delegation visited a local Catholic parish and school – St Irenaeus, Cypress. The parish priest is Father Bien. He advised that in the parish there are about 125 baptisms a year (compared to over 300 at Camden). He also advised that each year all parishes in the Diocese of Orange are required to take a count in November of all parishioners who attend Mass.

In last year's count, there were over 6,000 people, more than four times the average weekend attendance at Camden. He described the parishioners at St Irenaeus as very generous. The school has about 280 children. The principal was of the considered opinion that about 80% of families attended Mass regularly compared to about 5% in our own parish. The congress was truly a memorable and life-giving experience. And anyone can attend. The three-day congress registration fee was just \$US 75.



Basilica of San Juan Capistrano

The artistry at the back of the sanctuary is known as a Golden Retablo. It was made in Spain at a bargain-basement cost of \$2m.