

From The Rector

25 February 2021

What a great joy it was to have the 9:30AM Sunday service in person, as well as being live-streamed. We await instruction from the Archbishop regarding the resumption of congregational singing in church.

The parish has been well served by both Meg and Cynthia for their respective work within the parish office. The whole area of COVID-safe protocols is large and complex and both Meg and Cynthia were able to follow the directions of the Wardens and produce these protocols, which of course have to be rewritten every time there was a change in the NSW Health Department's restrictions. I do want to stress that every time there was a change to the COVID-safe protocols, a new COVID-safe plan was required to be submitted to NSW Health Department. Thank you, Meg and Cynthia, for all the work you have done in this area.

During the week, I made the opportunity to take time to appreciate all the various chalices, patens, ciboriums, the variety of cruets, as well as the available consumables. I spent one quiet evening this week cleaning a number of these items, which I enjoyed. By doing this I was able to understand a little more about the parish. Did you know that those who were confirmed in 1963 made a gift of a ciborium to the church? Were you part of that group? Or do you know someone who was? It is good to note, this same ciborium is still being used every Sunday.

The inscription on one chalice is:

*To the glory of God and in memory of Gunner Edgar Crisford,
killed in action in France, 23 April 1917.*

The church history books may shed light on who made the gift of the chalice to St. John's and when. I share that with you as at St. John's we have a good legacy in these items to enhance the worship to the glory of God, and also take time, and in this case, give thanks for Edgar, who joined the other young men killed during WWI.

St. John's has some beautiful and well-crafted silverware. The sets of chalices and patens were given for the glory of God and in memory of a departed well-loved member of St. John's. Age does take its toll and I will be advising the Parish Council that several of these items will require regilding (restoration by being resilvered). When the internal part of the chalice is worn, it should not be used until regilded. There are at least four chalices that fall into this category. There are a couple of other items that are also requiring regilding. I think you would agree with me, as the custodians of these gifts, it is incumbent on us all to keep them in good repair so they can still be utilised for the purposes for which they were given. I am also looking forward to seeing the special chalice and paten which only comes out during the special celebrations of Christmas and Easter.

I am seeking a few volunteers who may wish to assist me with giving the sanctuary a bit of tender loving care. It has been my habit for a number of decades (I am sounding old) to have a "Lent cleaning" of the church, especially the sanctuary, before Easter. The magnificent woodwork, including the reredos, altar, chairs and prayer desks would really enjoy some furniture oil. The candlesticks and brassware would benefit from polishing. I can appreciate some parishioners would be very keen to assist but may be feeling it is all a bit too much. That is why I am asking for a team of people who can help as much as they can and enjoy the fellowship of us all working on a good task.

Visitation

I have had several parishioners make appointments with me and ask if they could meet me. As I begin this ministry, I would like to start to visit members of St. John's. Of course, I cannot spent 24/7 visiting people, but I can try to use time wisely, allowing visiting a priority within my ministry. There will always be differing ministry activities competing for my time.

I will be conducting a funeral on Wednesday at the crematorium. Please pray for the family as I minister to them as the Rector of St. John's, Gordon. Please pray for Catherine and her family as they farewell her husband Peter.

Biblical Reflection: A Parable

The following contains some insights from John Stott. There is no doubt that many in society would not dispute that Jesus was a gifted teacher. Jesus chose to teach the crowds, and at times the inner twelve, through parables. Basically, the word "parable" means a **simile** or a **comparison**. It usually conveys one main point.

Have you noticed that Jesus normally introduces the teaching of a parable with the words, or similar words, to “the kingdom of God is like …”.

- I. So, the function of the parables that Jesus used was to illustrate the truth regarding the character, values and the coming of the kingdom of God.
- II. A parable was also to lead His listeners into a decision or action of some kind. Parables were more than a piece of comforting prose.
- III. Parables can both conceal the truth as well as reveal it.
“Though seeing they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.” (Matthew 13:13) Failure to understand was not the purpose of the parables, but the consequence if the hearers harden their hearts.

So, as you approach your daily devotions, and your readings lead you to one of the parables of Jesus, I encourage you to ask: What is the one truth that Jesus is teaching or affirming for me today?

I am looking forward to seeing you at church.

Father Robert H.

Note that Father Robert's day out of the office is Wednesday.

The e-mail address rector@stjohnsgordon.org.au is active and will reach Father Robert.