

From the Rector

Published 11 April 2021

Easter Celebrations

During the last twelve months, the pandemic has ravaged the world. Compared to the rest of the world, we Australians experienced inconvenience by the various COVID-safe protocols. Twelve months ago, we were unable to celebrate Easter as the churches were closed. I never thought I would have experienced a directive to close the church doors. What a difference this Easter! This Easter, as we were granted permission to return to church and worship the crucified and resurrected Saviour, Jesus Christ, Melinda and I were looking forward to worshipping with you over the Easter celebrations and it was a great joy.

“It is my first time back since COVID” was a statement I heard many times. I am looking forward to seeing more members of St. John’s returning into the whole life of the parish as the vaccines continue to be made available.

Whilst Bishop Michael was in the parish, I asked him to preach on most Sundays and other services. I am grateful for his ministry as a preacher. On Easter Day, I asked Bishop Michael to lead the services whilst I preached. It was very edifying to see his approach to the various services, starting with the dawn service. Bishop Michael is heading home and will now do some work for Bishop Keith within the Diocese of The Murray. I appreciated spending time with Bishop Michael and sharing some of his insights into the parish through his association as the Parish Missioner for several years. He will continue to offer the Bible study on Thursdays evenings through Zoom. Father Ernest showed his skills as he read the Passion narrative. Father Ernest will lead the Festal Evensong this Sunday.

I am appreciative of the work of the Musical Director. Brett’s insights and experience have shown through as he gave leadership to the choirs and singers with Nicola. Holy Week through to Resurrection Sunday was a healthy time of good worship within the life of St. John’s. I experienced and learnt what would “normally happen” during these Easter celebrations. Again, thank you to all who were involved.

Chrism Eucharist

Bishop Michael, Father Ernest and I attended the Chrism Eucharist on Tuesday, the 30th of April. This service included the reaffirmation of our ordination vows. The venue for the service was Christ Church St. Laurence, George Street, Sydney. There was a mixture of clergy and laity in attendance. Bishop Michael Stead, the Bishop of South Sydney, presided and also preached. The text was Zechariah 4:1-14. The discussions of the clergy afterwards all spoke highly of the sermon. The service included Communion and was liturgically rich in its expression. The choir added to the richness of this important worship service. Traditionally Chrism Eucharist is scheduled within Holy Week as we remember in more detail the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The oils are also blessed during this service and distributed to the various Rectors.

Nominees for the next Archbishop

It is so refreshing that the whole term and concept of being a candidate for Archbishop's position has been removed. The upcoming Elections Synod will be my third. History reveals when the candidate approach is adopted, there is some form of campaigning from zealous supporters. I often wondered where God was when people were caught up in the ways of the world—campaigning. It is a joy to read that each of the nominees has agreed *not to see themselves as candidates*, but rather each has allowed their name to go forward to allow the members of Synod to determine God's will in this matter. What a joy, as each of the four nominees would make a fine Archbishop. Each minister would bring their respective skills to this position.

The four nominees are:

- ◆ The Right Reverend Chris Edwards, Bishop of the Northern Region
- ◆ The Right Reverend Peter Hayward, Bishop of the Wollongong Region
- ◆ The Right Reverend Michael Stead, Bishop of the Southern Region
- ◆ The Very Reverend Kanishka Raffel, Dean of St. Andrew's Cathedral.

There will be a one-day ordinary session of Synod on the 3rd of May. The Right Reverend Peter Hayward will chair this Synod as he is now the Diocesan Administrator. The 4th of May and following days, if required, will be the Special Election Synod, which will be chaired by Bishop Peter Lin, as Peter Hayward has allowed his name to go forward as a nominee. I would ask that you pray for Nigel Hubbard, Jennifer Lum and myself as your representatives. Please pray that the Lord will grant to Synod wisdom as they have such a weighty responsibility made lighter as each person depends on the Holy Spirit's guidance.

The Annual Vestry Meeting

The Annual Vestry Meeting is on the 18th of April, commencing at 11:00AM (next week!). I am looking forward to chairing this meeting. The Wardens' Report has been made available and the Treasurer's Financial Report will also be available this Sunday. I realise all systems can have their shortcomings, yet as Anglicans, we have an excellent governance system under the Parish Administration Ordinance. The AVM allows for the members to elect from their membership people to form the Parish Council. Parish Council also includes the Wardens, who, in conjunction with the Rector, make decisions and give leadership for the parish's well-being. To assist in the smooth and orderly running of the Annual Vestry Meeting, will now share some of my expectations for the AVM.

- ⇒ All nominations for the various positions will be required to be in prior to the commencement of the AVM. The reason behind this expectation is that I believe everyone who has nominated a member for a position would have done so after prayer and reflection. Have you asked a current Parish Council member, including the Wardens, who would like to accept nomination to serve again for another twelve months?
- ⇒ Nominations are required for the positions of Wardens, Parish Councillors, Parish Nominators. Please note the voting for the position of Synod Representatives is not required this year.
- ⇒ The positions of Parish Auditor and Safe Ministry Representative also have to be filled.
- ⇒ All reports are required to be tabled before being asked to speak to them.
- ⇒ The AVM is a golden opportunity to give thanks for the sovereignty of the LORD over the past twelve months plus an opportunity to set forward steps for the upcoming year.
- ⇒ The AVM is also an opportunity for parish members to ask questions, especially if they are questions for the parish's health and well-being. It would be helpful to have the questions beforehand, thus allowing time to address the question appropriately.
- ⇒ Finally, the AVM is also the means for the parish members to raise issues to be considered by the newly elected Parish Council.

I look forward to seeing you at the Sunday services of worship.

Father Robert H.