

The Rector's Weekly Message

Sunday the 26th of September 2021

Psalm 43 (RSV)

Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause
against an ungodly people;
from those who are deceitful and unjust
deliver me!

² For you are the God in whom I take refuge;
why have you cast me off?

Why must I walk about mournfully
because of the oppression of the enemy?

³ O send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;

let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling.

⁴ Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy;
and I will praise you with the harp,
O God, my God.

⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God.

There are some interesting approaches to this Psalm. I remember the testimony of one person who would ask God to strike down all who had caused him harm after quoting this Psalm daily. That is not what the Psalm teaches. It is a cry of a hurting person, who he has been dealt with unjustly in his own eyes.

The Psalmist knows there is a refuge in the LORD, and the LORD will provide more than a sanctuary but will continue to guide through His light and truth. When dwelling upon the character of God, the Psalmist realises that there will be 'exceeding joy' – He must place his hope in the LORD.

Temptation, to focus on being mistreated, and being the victim can raise its ugly head. Like the love children of God, we know he has given us His truth and light. We place our hope on the sure promises of God. When I read this Psalm, in contrast I am always drawn back to Jesus. In particular, Jesus word's from the Cross. After Jesus had been betrayed, mocked, scourged and then crucified – he cried out – "Father forgive them" Luke 23:34.

Dr Brett McKern:

On behalf of the Warden's and the Parish, I have written to Brett, expressing our collective gratitude for his faithful service over the last Thirteen plus years. There is no doubt that Brett is going to be missed. His legacy of instructing the Choirs and mentoring Nicola will continue to bear fruit into the future. Brett's advice and enthusiasm played a part in having a magnificent Organ, which would be second to none in the Northern Region and possibly well beyond. What is also going to be missed is Brett's fellowship as a brother in Christ. There is much more to Brett than a musician, his love for God, and his love for God's people, which I have only experienced in part, has further endeared him to the people of St. Johns. The clergy, my predecessors, and assistant or associate priests have all valued the ministry Brett has exercised at St. Johns. As mentioned previously, at a time after lockdown that suits both the Parish and Dr McKern, the Parish will hold a function to thank and honour him.

Diocesan/Regional Meeting

JK, James, Chris, and I all attended a zoom meeting this week. The Archbishop and the leadership team organise these meetings in each of the regions of the Diocese. Wardens' and Rectors were invited and encouraged to attend. These meetings were designed to speak to the varying issues of opening the Church in the weeks ahead.

Each Parish will be required to observe the Public Health Orders. There is a strong expectation that the Public Health Orders will change when people doubled vaccinated reach 70% and then again at 80%. A simple yet problematic issue is how do we know who is double vaccinated? I have talked to two of the Bishops, and I was interested in their thoughts. Both suggested it may be more prudent to open when the target of 80% doubled vaccinated is reached

The Wardens and I will discuss both the legal and practical issues. The practical issues include ministering to those members who are not vaccinated and also to those who are doubled vaccinated. Ventilation throughout the Church is another issue that will require further investigation.

Would you continue to pray that the Wardens and I have wisdom as we decide when and how the Church will reopen?

St John's Music Association Inc.

Last Sunday, the 19th, the SJMA conducted their Annual Meeting. This meeting was conducted by zoom. It was an honouring meeting of the values of the SJMA. It was pleasing to see Mr Bill Kinger AM re-elected to the position of Chairman of this Association. As SJMA is a private association, I am unsure how much I can share about their business meeting. The Rector is an Ex-Officio member of the SJMA.

Sorting – Stocktaking:

I am pleased and encouraged that various individuals have quietly been cleaning and sorting various areas of the Church Complex. As a Parish, we have been so blest with a variety of musical instruments. These instruments reflect the rich musical history of the Parish. Stocktaking allows for planning of how to utilise these resources for future ministry opportunities. This sorting – stocktaking will continue and should be correctly seen as preparing for ministry opportunities.

Food Relief

With the Rectory so visible, people are coming to receive help. On behalf of the Parish, I give a thirty dollar food card to those seeking assistance. These cards can be used at our local supermarket and petrol station. A couple of regulars have been becoming for help from St John's for years. This ministry averages about One Hundred dollars a month.

Wednesday Night Bible Study

The evening group have completed the study on Mark's Gospel. This study was designed to assist in learning how to share the essential aspects of the Christian faith. The study required the participants to read the Gospel of Mark: the course outline is:-

Session One: Jesus – the Son of God.

Session Two: Jesus – his death on the Cross

Session Three: Jesus – his Resurrection.

Session Four: Grace – not works!

Session Five: What is a Christian? *Repentance*.

Session Five: What is a Christian? *Believing*.

The Wednesday Night Bible Study will have a one week break. This Group is going to recommence examining various questions and issues that have arisen during the lockdown.

The position of Organist & Music Director:

I know you would be praying for the LORD's guidance as the process commences in looking for the 'new' Director of Music and Organist. The first step in the process is to review this role in light of the Parish requirements. Where is the parish heading? What areas require assistance, for example, *children and youth ministry*. Can the position of Director of Music and Organist be divided into two different positions?

In all my experience of being a Rector, I have learnt that when a ministry position becomes vacant, it is also good to assess the directions of that particular ministry afresh. This practice affirms and values the faithful ministry that has ended. This practice also allows for listening to the LORD and seeking to understand what He is doing within our midst.

Once the evaluation is done, then advertisement of the position will be undertaken. Even this aspect of the process requires patience and trust as we determine the LORD's leading. This action is where the Church is different to secular organisations. When a secular organisation has a vacancy – and then fill that position. As followers of God, we are encouraged to seek *what the LORD's leading is in this matter*. Hence I would value your prayers at this time.

May the Peace of the LORD be with you.

Fr. Robert H
0401 950 724