

Food Drive.

Another generous contribution for the Food Drive for Refugees has been donated by Our Lady of Nativity parishioners and plans has been delivered to the **House of Welcome**. This concludes our food drive at this time. However, the need is still great and it is possible to donate money or supermarket food vouchers. These donations can be made to either the Jesuit Refugee service, jrs.org.au/donate-now or the House of Welcome stfrancis.org.au/house-of-welcome/make-donation-house-welcome. Food vouchers can be posted to The House of Welcome 197 The Trongate South Granville 2142.

Many thanks to everyone who has responded with such great enthusiasm and generosity.

Maureen Ryan and Carol Tedori,

KINDER ENROLMENT 2021.

We are currently taking names of children who will be commencing Kindergarten in 2021.

If your child will commence Kinder in 2021 please ring the Our Lady of the Nativity School Office on 47532200 and ask for an Enrolment pack to be sent out.

Office for Worship Liturgical Ministry Formation Course .

The Office For Worship's Liturgical Ministry Formation course will recommence in August at both the Institute for Mission, Blacktown and St Nicholas of Myra Parish, Penrith. Two workshops on Liturgical Ministry will also be provided in October at St Finbar's Parish, Glenbrook. Note: due to restrictions there are limited places available. For more information, contact the Office for Worship on anne.alimangohan@parracatholic.org

Share your Good News Stories!.

Thank you for all that you continue to do to share the love and peace of God. The Diocesan Pastoral Planning Office welcomes your good news stories of hope and encouragement during COVID-19 to share with parishes and communities across our Diocese. If you have a good news story to offer, please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/goodnewsstory>

Reopening of church buildings.

Parishes across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains have opened their doors for private prayer, Reconciliation and for the celebration of Mass and sacraments such as baptisms, weddings and funerals. Please contact your local parish to check the arrangements put in place.

Livestreamed Masses from across the Diocese of Parramatta are still available on the Diocesan website <https://www.parracatholic.org/covid19/#online>.

***Our Lady of Nativity Parish Bulletin .***

254 Great Western Highway, Lawson, NSW 2783. **PO BOX 44, Lawson, 2783.**

Phone: 4759 1034.

Email: olon3@bigpond.com / lawson@parracatholic.org

Parish Website: www.lawsoncatholicchurch.org.au

Parish Priest: Fr Paul Slyney - 4754 1052. **Emergency:** 0418 461 316.

Assistant Priest: Fr Michael Gathuku - 4754 1052. **Emergency:** 0474 272 605.

Parish Office Hours:

Thursdays & Fridays 9.30 am - 3.30 pm.

The Church will be open for private prayer during these hours.

Weekend Masses:

Saturday 5:00 PM. Sunday 8:00 AM & 9:00 AM.

Weekday Mass:

5:00PM Tuesday and Wednesday and 9:00 AM Thursday. **30 people only at each Mass. Call the parish office to confirm your attendance at the Mass of your choice.**

Covid-19 and social distancing restrictions apply to all Masses.

Baptisms:

By appointment. Call the parish office.

Reconciliation:

By appointment .Call the parish office.

Weddings:

By appointment six months notice. Call the parish office.

From the Parish Management Team's Desk, July 2020.

COVID-19 has given us all a challenge. We would like to let you know what has developed over these past 4 months **to keep our community life alive**. At our last meeting on July 22nd, we discussed many aspects of our parish life.

1. **Sacramental Program.** The only program that is possible to conduct this year for our children is Confirmation. First Communion and Reconciliation are postponed until next year, and parents are being supported in the meantime by ongoing communication.

2. **Parish Website:** We are grateful to John Leaney for developing our website, supported by John Hendriks, Terry O'Donnell and Mark Geerligs. The recorded Sunday Mass, the bulletin, Laurie Woods' commentary and the St Paul Sunday celebration Order of Service are still being put on the site each week. There are also occasional pieces from contributors. John Leaney would love to receive any offerings for the website that can keep our community in touch with each other.

3. **Opportunities for Getting Together:**

The most common way for some parishioners to keep contact with each other during the past 4 months of the pandemic was through tele-conferencing on **Zoom**. Two different groups met for a number of times: -

*Laurie Woods conducted sessions on the Gospels.

*Parishioners joined in on a Saturday Morning Chat.

4. **Social Distancing in the church: this has been of grave concern.** We have been informed by some fellow parishioners that they are deeply concerned for themselves and others when someone slips into a pew and remains directly behind or in front of someone else. Please, we must avoid this oversight at all costs.

5. **Ongoing Concerns:**

The Parish **Management** Team realizes that we need to face some hard questions as a result of COVID-19. Let us take a moment to consider these questions please:

-What more can we do to assist those who want to celebrate Eucharist but can't come to the church for various reasons?and there are many!

-How do we reach, and come to know, those who may need some kind of care?

-Are we losing connection with each other? If so, what do we do?

-There are some using these times to re-assess the meaning of going to Mass. What challenge is this throwing out to us as a community?

What has continued since the lockdown in March is the distribution of the Parish bulletin to those either not on the internet, or simply prefer the print copy. If you would like to receive a print copy, or know of someone who does, call the Parish office please.

Our next meeting is **August 18**. Please offer the parish team some of your wisdom after hearing these concerns.

As they say....**we are all in it together!**

Don't hesitate to pass on your observations/ideas to the parish office.

**Recently Deceased:****Anniversaries:** Robert Stockton.

Sick: Fr Theo Arrivoli, Rob Nickl, Tochillo Brown. Maurice Rooney, Lan Franco Matteucci John Newman, Raymond Plumridge, Theresa Stockton, Shane O'Neill and all Private Intentions. *Due to the strict privacy laws, names of the deceased and sick can only be included in the Bulletin with the permission of the immediate family. Thank you..*

Lectionary readings**First reading:** Isaiah 55:1-3**Psalm** 144(145):8-9, 15-18**Second reading:** Romans 8:35, 37-39**Gospel:** Matthew 14:13-21

The theme uniting the readings this week is clearly that of the boundless generosity of God: God gives freely and God gives in extravagant measure.

This note is struck in **First Reading**, Isa 55:1-3. To the Israelites, who have known such a miserable existence during the Exile, the prophet holds out a vision of the messianic age (note the 'favours promised to David'). While the corn, wine and milk that is freely offered may refer in first instance to these foods in a material sense, the invitation to 'come to the water' echoes language associated in other parts of scripture with divine Wisdom (Proverbs 3; 8; Sirach 4; John 7:37-39).

This suggests that what is really on offer is a divine enhancement of life for which, in the depths of their being, most people thirst. All forms of spirituality, all techniques of prayer, seek to tap this source of life, which is the gift of God alone and which, like a perpetual spring of water, is freely given.

GOD'S GENEROSITY.

The episode of the feeding of the 5000 of the Loaves from the **Gospel**, Matt 14:13-21, looks backwards to biblical traditions about God's generous provision of food, such as the manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16; Numbers 11) and the miracle of the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 4:42-44); it looks forward to the gift of the Eucharist and, ultimately, to the final banquet in the Kingdom of God, of which the Eucharist is both foretaste and symbol. Herod's execution of John the Baptist (Matt 14:1-12) has highlighted the danger in which Jesus himself now stands. So, he seeks to withdraw, going by boat to a lonely place. The people, however, thwart this move, gathering in large numbers to meet him as soon as he steps ashore.

In Matthew's account what they particularly seek from Jesus is healing (in Mark 6:34 he 'teaches'). When, despite his desire to withdraw, he accedes to their needs, they show no inclination to disperse. So, the disciples, functioning rather like 'minders' attached to a celebrity, urge him to send the crowds off to nearby villages to buy provisions for the night.

Jesus reacts to the word 'buy.' He will not send people away to buy anything – nor should his disciples (see the First Reading): 'There is no need for them to go; give them something to eat yourselves'. When the astonished disciples point out that they barely have enough for themselves (five loaves and two fish), Jesus encourages them to trust that there will be enough..

THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

This is one of the more difficult miracles of Jesus to explain in terms of what might have 'really happened'. Preachers are probably wise to keep away from such speculations – ultimately fruitless since we simply haven't got sufficient information to ever know for sure. The fact that the tradition appears no less than six times across all four Gospels (twice in Matthew and Mark; once in Luke and John) points to its theological significance in the early Christian tradition. It is on this that we should chiefly focus. Central to the theological significance is the way in which the episode anticipates the institution of the Eucharist. Jesus' gestures – 'taking (the loaves)', 'blessing', 'breaking', 'giving' – foreshadow those at the Last Supper (Matt 26:26). The Evangelist expects that readers will understand that when they participate in the Eucharist they are experiencing the same divine hospitality that the Galilean crowds in this 'lonely place' experienced from Jesus.

Instead of having to go off and 'buy' provisions, God satisfies their hunger in abundance ('all ate as much as they wanted'). The twelve baskets of left-over fragments highlight the abundance. Even the final comment about the non-inclusion of women and children in the reckoning, grating as it is to our more gender-inclusive ears, by enhancing the number of people fed, reinforces the same sense of abundant generosity.

FORESHADOWS THE EUCHARIST. The miraculous feeding and the Eucharist which it foreshadows make clear that what God wants to do for humanity is simply be a most generous Host at the banquet of eternal life. At the same time, since it depicts people being fed with real food, it is also 'sacramental' in the sense of bearing directly upon the problem of hunger still affecting so large a proportion of our world. The Lord who looked on the large crowd and took pity on them, looks with similar eyes upon our world and instructs us, as he instructed his disciples, 'Give them something to eat yourselves'. In the words of Pedro Arrupe, 'The Eucharist will never be complete so long as people still go hungry in our world'.

The **Second Reading**, Rom 8:35, 37–39, taken from the conclusion to Paul's splendid eighth chapter of Romans, certainly merits mention but hardly needs explanation.

OUR LADY OF THE NATIVITY SCHOOL

7 Somers Street, Lawson.

Phone: 4753 2200**Email:** oln@parra.catholic.edu.au**Principal:** Mrs Lisa Samojlowicz**SANTA MARIA CONFERENCE CENTRE**

Available for meetings, functions & conferences.

Phone Sr Veronica on 4759 1116 for enquiries



First Holy Communion has been postponed until 2021. This is usually such a significant time in the life of our Catholic Church communities. The children look forward to it as a special time for them culminating in a joyous celebration when they share at the Table of the Lord with their family and friends for the first time and again later with our extended faith community.

But this year, the postponement of the program brings a combination of feelings including disappointment, probably mixed with some relief, as the strain of the Corona Virus has presented all of us, especially families, with many challenges.

The families have been encouraged by a letter, through the mail, not to wait until the middle of the year before starting the preparation process. They can "help their children grow in their understanding of the mass by helping them to see the connection between a family meal and the sacred meal we celebrate at Mass. **Having a family meal is the most basic and powerful way of children understanding the Mass.**

Please join our young families in this long lead-up time to their First Holy Communion by remembering them in your prayers,

The Sacramental Team.