



St. Simon the Apostle Parish

2 Taylors Lane, Rowville 3178

Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday 9.00-4.00pm

(03) 9764 4058

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Parish Personnel

PARISH PRIEST:

Fr Kevin Dillon

Mobile: 0421 777 360

Email: frkd@stsimonsparish.com.au

PASTORAL ASSOCIATES:

Mrs Loretta Hughes (Tue, Thu)

Mrs Abbie Ferdinands (Mon, Wed, Fri)

SACRAMENTAL CO-ORDINATOR:

Mrs Marialisa Mandarino (Wed)

BUSINESS & OFFICE MANAGER:

Mr Peter Evans (Mon - Thu)

CHILD SAFEGUARDING:

Ms Delisa Gonsalves (Mon)

SECRETARIES:

Mrs Felicia Ahumada (Mon - Wed)

Mrs Christina Liew (Thu, Fri)

ST. SIMON'S SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:

Mr. Tom Wursthorn: 9755 4222

NAZARETH COLLEGE PRINCIPAL:

Mr Sam Cosentino: 9795 8100

WEEKEND MASS TIMES:

Saturday Vigil: 6.00pm

Sundays: 8.00am, 9.30am, 11.00am

OTHER MASS TIMES:

Mondays to Saturdays: 9.15am

Tuesdays: 7.00pm

RECONCILIATION:

Saturdays: 9.45am

BAPTISMS:

First Sat 11.30am, Third Sun 12.30pm

(Please check website for available dates)

AFTER SCHOOL RELIGIOUS

EDUCATION:

Tues (school term): 4:15pm - 5:15pm

WEDDINGS & MARRIAGE PREP:

Contact Parish Office.

ANointing OF THE SICK:

When required or at 9.15am Mass

on the First Friday of the Month

PARISH COUNCIL:

parishcouncil@stsimonsparish.com.au

MASS ON RADIO:

Mass from St. Simon's is broadcast

on 89.9 Light FM - at 7am Sundays

PARISH HALL HIRE:

St. Simon's Parish Hall is available for

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For enquiries, contact the Parish Office during Office Hours. Phone: 9764 4058.

PARISH CENTRE FACILITIES HIRE:

Contact the Parish Office.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL HELPLINE:

1800 305 330

April 19, 2020 - 2nd Sunday of Easter

As we try to work our way through the myriad of challenges, disappointments, heartaches - and hopefully some opportunities - in these extraordinary times, this article from Wednesday's "Age" may be of assistance. If you find it helpful, send it on to others from our website.

Fr. Kevin Dillon



THIS IS GRIEF, PURE IF NOT SO SIMPLE

The confusing mix of fear, anger, sorrow and disbelief that I can feel tightening my chest right now is horribly familiar. This is grief, pure and not so simple. Grief for the loss of our lifestyles, jobs and livelihoods, our futures as we'd planned them with all those longed-for holidays, weddings and parties.

It's the same painful feelings I had when my husband, Bill, died in November 2017. That cataclysmic event also came out of the blue and devastated the world I knew. A seemingly healthy 56-year-old, Bill collapsed from an undiagnosable aortic dissection, and 36 hours later I was told he would not survive.

My world imploded and the ground disappeared, plunging me into tumultuous, overwhelming confusion. The safe, stable ship in which I'd been sailing had just self-destructed and I was left flailing amid the wreckage in a dark and stormy ocean, no land in sight.

I imagine a lot of us might be feeling a similar sense of disorientation right now. Through no fault of our own, and out of nowhere, life as we know it has disappeared out from under us and we are left scrabbling around for certainty and a way of life that we once took for granted.

What I came to realise in the wake of Bill's death, and what I can see building around me now, is that the big obvious loss - the life of a loved one - forms only part of the story. It is in the mounting accumulation of all those smaller, subsidiary losses which come clamouring in its wake, that we can feel adrift and rudderless.

Things are changing so rapidly right now that we lose something new every day. Yesterday the pub and the hairdresser, today the park and going to work, tomorrow perhaps the corner shop and the daily exercise.

Those of us who live alone have lost physical contact. Never getting a hug or the hold of a hand - that is huge.

For those of us cooped up with our families, it's the loss of privacy, that crucial bit of "me time" so necessary for our sanity, that has vanished. We have all lost contact with our friends that for many of us forms a mainstay of our sanity. Somehow, speaking to them digitally - and thank goodness we at least do have that - just doesn't seem to assuage the deep feelings of missing and yearning for their real physical presence.

Children have lost landmark events in their lives. The last weeks of school and the associated memories they were meant to treasure forever: year-end proms; signatures on school shirts; even the chance to sit their exams and thereby earn validation and closure to years of work, have been denied them. They've lost play dates, sport - both the doing and the watching - and they've lost contact with beloved grandparents.

And let's not even start on what the grandparents have lost - talk about the grief of losing out on all those cuddles and all that play time. Cuddles which for many are not only comforting, but often provide meaning and purpose to otherwise lonely existences.

Goodness, I'm depressing myself writing all this. And that, too, is familiar. I drew up a similar list of subsidiary losses when Bill died. I had to acknowledge everything I'd lost alongside him in order to fully grieve. That made me realise what a huge span it was, ranging from losing my sense of self, my purpose, confidence in my safety, right through to losing the will and the energy to exercise and thus also losing my figure and a recognisable reflection in the mirror.

(PTO)



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April 19, 2020 - 2nd Sunday of Easter

(Continued from previous page)

It's a pretty bleak list. Too much of that and you are definitely heading for the wine, chocolate, online shopping - fill in your own particular go-to comfort here. Yet it's important to do that. Unacknowledged grief will fester and come back to bite you at a later date.

Far better to recognise just how much has gone, and really mourn even the things that may seem trivial. And that means creating space and compassion for the pain.

Allowing yourself to say "Yes, this hurts, this is scary, this feels unbearable and unfair". Because it is. So allow yourself to stamp your foot and howl and scream and shout and feel sorry for yourself.

I did all those things and more when Bill died, even though such behaviour feels completely unnatural. We are all so trained out of what we tend to label "wallowing" or "self-indulgence". It comes much more naturally to focus on how others have it worse, how we can't really complain, that it's not so bad really.

But do not underestimate or minimise the pain these losses can cause. They do not feel trivial in the moment, and not when stacked up on top of all the others coming thick and fast on a daily, sometimes hourly, basis.

Only by identifying and giving space to all - the big and small, the concrete and abstract - can the sadness, anger, fear and more, rise to the surface where they can be dealt with.

This is not an easy task. It can feel overwhelming, and it does take a while. But what I found was that compassionately allowing the pain, did, in fact, lessen the pain. And in the wake of this clearing out came space for other things to flourish.

New shoots of hope started appearing from this huge compost heap of misery I'd created. I call these new shoots "gems in the rubble", and I eventually found many such gems. After a while, I was able to write a list of those, too.

I am never going to not see the rubble and sadness of my life without Bill, but it actually cheered me up to discover how loved I was, how amazing my friends are, how selfless and giving they could be. I discovered humour in adversity, I discovered the usefulness of writing my way through my feelings, of realising I could not only manage alone, but find pleasure in being alone. From the depths of my despair, I discovered that I can survive anything, and that gives me greater confidence in my own strength and adaptability.

I have faith that as a nation we will discover that, too, eventually.

I have found purpose and meaning by turning my focus towards others who may need more help than I do. This is already happening around us. A massive positive of our current situation is seeing how disparate communities banded together to find out who among them most needed help - and then set about providing that help, sometimes in ingenious ways. That creativity itself is another gem to be cherished.

When I looked for ways to help others I got as much, if not more, than I gave in terms of gaining deeper and broader connections, new and improved relationships. And the best new relationship of all was with myself. I got to know myself intimately, saw which of my age-old habits were helpful, and which were less so.

When circumstances bring you face to face with your deepest fears you start to understand how many defences and distractions you normally have to hide behind. Then you can start to dismantle them. As the reality of either isolation or over-close contact with family members kicks in, we will be put to the test like never before.

It will be horrible - we cannot deny the rubble that COVID-19 brings in its wake - but we will find out who we really are and what we are capable of.

We can let that knowledge drown us, or we can use it as a lifeboat to help lift us up and out of the norm and reveal to us that we can rise to this awful challenge we have been set.

Sasha Bates - The Telegraph, London
(reprinted in "The Age", Wed. April 15, 2020)



April 19, 2020 - 2nd Sunday of Easter

First reading

Acts 2:42-47

The whole community remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone.

The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

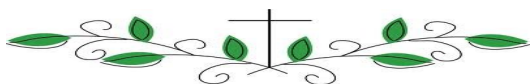
They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

Responsorial Psalm: 117(118):2-4,13-15,22-24

Second reading

1 Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has given us a new birth as his sons, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, so that we have a sure hope and the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoiled or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens. Through your faith, God's power will guard you until the salvation which has been prepared is revealed at the end of time. This is a cause of great joy for you, even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of trials; so that, when Jesus Christ is revealed, your faith will have been tested and proved like gold – only it is more precious than gold, which is corruptible even though it bears testing by fire – and then you will have praise and glory and honour. You did not see him, yet you love him; and still without seeing him, you are already filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described, because you believe; and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls.



Gospel

John 20:19-31

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you', and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you.'

'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.'

After saying this he breathed on them and said:

'Receive the Holy Spirit.

For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord', he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him:

'You believe because you can see me.

Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.

*Next Week's Readings: 3rd Sunday of Easter
Acts 2:14,22-33; 1 Peter 1:17-21; Luke 24:13-35*

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