

One Day at a Time

Father Tim's Daily Reflections
during the COVID-19 crisis

Thursday 30 April

Third Week of Easter / Pope St Pius V

4.45pm – Our IT friend **Arkar Daniels** and his mate from **Joondanna Parish** have commandeered my office, so I'm writing from my lounge room. For once I'm not racing to get everything done in preparation for live-streaming this evening's Mass! Today I did my grocery shopping, wrote today's homily, prepared the PowerPoint, wrote out some music for Mass, and had a coffee and chat with my friend **John Pintabona** from **Leederville Parish**.

John was a police officer for 30 years, and then moved to a position at **Main Roads** two years ago. He's also a member of the **Knights of the Holy Sepulchre** – I'm a member, too, so we talked about the kinds of activities we could organise for the Knights during this pandemic. The Knights are an order of chivalry whose traditions date back to the time of the Crusades. Today they are an organisation with both men and women as members. They promote the spiritual growth of the members, and also support various charitable works in the Holy Land. It's now a bit of a challenge – as it is for all groups – to find ways for the Order to continue its work.

Yesterday morning I was a bit dismayed to hear the **Prime Minister** state quite firmly that while churches might be able to open for a few hours several days per week for private prayer, any gatherings of congregations for liturgy "won't be happening", in his words. I, like many others, had been hoping that we might be 'open for business' later this year, perhaps in September. But the Prime Minister lumped **church openings** together with cinemas and restaurants: **no go**. He also said that international travel, other than possibly New Zealand, won't be possible until maybe the middle of next year. The comment about churches came right after that. So are we faced with closed churches until mid-2021?

One of my first concerns is how to administer the sacraments – **First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation** – to our children. I plan to approach the Archdiocese about this; we have to come up with a plan.

Here at St Paul's, we are constantly working on **upgrading our live-streaming system**, to get the best quality video and audio, not only for our daily Masses, but also for bible study, RCIA and catechism. Since there is no real end in sight for re-opening the church, we have to be serious about providing the parish with quality live-streaming.

It has been suggested that we use **Zoom** for bible study, etc. I've thought about it, but I'm not sure I want a 'Brady Bunch' approach to these sessions; it could be distracting and a bit messy. So we're looking at streaming from the church, where the system is all set up. I'll sit at the computer desk in the corner behind the organ, and get one or two people to sit nearby to engage with me in discussion. But the major part of bible study and RCIA is presentation, not discussion, so there's really no need for a lot of people Zooming in – I may be wrong, and I'm open to being convinced otherwise, but right now I plan to stick with the small group plan.

For **bible study**, we'll look at **Pope Benedict's** wonderful 3-volume work, [Jesus of Nazareth](#). I'll have one of the people present read a paragraph or two, and then I'll comment, assisted by photos of the places and people mentioned in the text. I think Pope Benedict's writing is absolutely brilliant. Many is the time I was reading this in the confessional whilst awaiting 'customers' – and if someone came in, I was tempted to say, "Would you please wait a few minutes until I finish this chapter?" Of course,

I never did – but seriously, the book is a real page-turner, and probably the best life of Christ I have ever read.

For **RCIA**, we'll continue where we left off with the text, Essentials of the Faith. It would be problematic from a copyright angle to show episodes of the film series we have used (Catholicism by Bishop Robert Barron and Symbolon by Dr Robert Sri), so I'll just mention and show on the screen where the appropriate segments can be accessed. Since the parish has a subscription to **FORMED**, it would be ideal for participants to watch these segments at home – both series are included with the FORMED subscription.

Ah – it's now 5.15pm. The live-streaming crew is arriving at church. It takes about 30 minutes to set up the system, practise the music, review the PowerPoint script and prepare the altar – not like 'the old days' when we just lit the candles and started Mass! Later!