



St Peter Chanel & St Joseph Parish

Streams of living water will flow from within. ~John 7:38

26 August 2020

Dear Parishioners

Restrictions on gatherings, including religious, seems to continue for some more time, even beyond Christmas this year. In this pandemic time, we all take care to foster health and well-being of everyone. We cooperate with the government and health authorities to accommodate the necessary changes to social behaviour and organisation of our life. Accordingly, we have suspended social gatherings before and after Mass, and other celebrations requiring larger social gatherings.

The Sacramental programs are done mostly through interactive internet media. Bible Study and such other Adult Faith Formation programs of the parish are also done mostly through electronic media. The parish Mass is also made available on Berala Parish YouTube. These are the stop gaps and never fully satisfactory. Human proximity and spiritual fellowships are integral parts of our faith life. Spiritual Communion cannot be a permanent substitute for real Communion in the Eucharist with blessed bread and wine. We are called to be the mystical but the 'real body' of Christ through the gathering of the physical people, not virtual body. Nobody wants to make YouTube Masses the new normal. Therefore, I would like to explore ways of providing more opportunities for the faithful to participate in Mass. Should that require more Masses in addition to the scheduled ones, I am prepared for that. All parishioners should be able to participate safely in the Eucharist on a weekly basis.

The present schedule of Vigil Mass at 5 pm on Saturdays, and the Sunday Masses at 8 am and 10 am are well attended, though the Vigil and 8am Sunday Masses are short of the maximum 90 attendees allowed. Most Sundays, 10am Masses attracts more than 90 people and these are conducted with closed doors to restrict the numbers. Yet I do not want anyone to miss out on the Sunday Mass. If additional Masses on Sunday or Saturday evening is the solution I am prepared to consider it. In the event of special occasions in the family or in the cultural groups or friends association seek a special Mass that too is doable. Therefore, may I ask you to send me a response indicating your preference of Mass times. The following is a guide to help you.

I would like to attend

- Saturday Vigil
- an additional vigil at
- 8 am Sunday
- 10 am Sunday
- additional Mass after 11 am on Sunday ...
- a special group Mass for (name of the group)

The above survey will help me tailor the Mass schedule for the benefit of greater number of parishioners.

You are also welcome to discuss with me other pastoral needs such as baptisms, marriages, special prayer groups, Sacrament of Reconciliation, children's Sacramental programs, and spiritual guidance.

The parish finances rely on donations and Sunday collections. It has declined to less than half in this COVID time. My thanks to all those who are making their contributions using various means of 'touch free' facilities provided. Instead of the collection plates, now we have *two jars* on the offertory table for cash donation, along with tap on facility (Quest) and QR Code for electronic transfers. The 'Support Us' button on the parish website is also available for secure donation using internet. I acknowledge that there are people who have lost jobs and in financial hardship. But there may be others who are able to support their parish. I would like to appeal for their support to keep the parish going.

First Collection supports the fund that pays priest's expenses. Presently the priests of the archdiocese are supported by the job keeper payment. Should that reduce or cease then the Clergy Remuneration Fund will have to think of other ways of supporting your clergy in the ministry.

The fund that supports the retired clergy depends on donations to cater for the retired priests. There is a special, annual, appeal in September towards the fund that support the retired clergy. Your contributions towards this appeal will be greatly appreciated.

Without compromising the COVID precautions, we can keep up the fellowship of the faithful; and we can live our lives fuller. My inspiration is John 10:10 "*I have come so that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.*" I would like to continue to be your minister, providing pastoral care of you. Let me know how I can help you better.

God bless you all!

Fr Thomas Kurunthanam