



## WARRACKNABEAL'S COVID-19 APPROACH

### Reflections from Mons. Glynn Murphy on the pandemic:

Yes, it is a 'long haul' especially for our older parishioners who greatly value the Eucharist weekly and who are a core group faithful to daily Mass. I celebrate the Eucharist daily and let them know that such occurs, encouraging their 'spiritual communion' with each sacrament, even though they are physically separated currently.

I also celebrated an Anzac Vigil Mass at St Joseph's Hopetoun and an Anzac Day Mass at St Mary's Warracknabeal. This was important to many, even with no congregations. These Masses were well attended last year.

I send out daily emails of faith/spiritual resources to a list across the parish regions (Rainbow, Hopetoun, Beulah, Warracknabeal, Minyip communities.) Initially, I included a Catholic 'resources' page for the internet – including live-streamed Masses both from around Australia and Pope Francis. Some 'regulars' who do not have computer access get week-end 'letter box drops', with the Sunday Scriptures, Faith reflection and other topical articles.

We are also ready for the immediate re-opening of our five churches when such is permitted, under 'COVID conditions' as may be directed. Happily a blessing is the size of the churches, which will allow the normal worshipping communities to 'spread out' for each Mass and adhere to social distancing health precautions. Shrinking rural populations retaining original church structures may end up being an advantage some city parishes may not have, coming out of COVID isolation. Thanks, of course, to the sacrifice of past generations, building those churches.

There is a 'grieving' for not being able to gather, worship and identify. The first Masses will (as everywhere) be occasions of great joy and a reminder of the absolute sacred right of freedom of religious expression and worship, embedded in Australian society, yet not to be taken for granted.

In our two primary schools the teachers and staff are doing a great effort of ministry – guiding home-based education while also providing a secure and nurturing school environment for those children (from day-to-day) who do not have a parent able to be at home with them, due to work commitments. The co-operation (across the diocese) of school staff, children, families and the Catholic Education Office Ballarat resourcing is a powerful ministry to our young in a time of social upheaval. It 'anchors' them to a positive community in the midst of isolation. Well done, all!