



## · **Father Paul Writes - 17<sup>th</sup> of September, 2023**

I welcome you today as we come together during this Season of Creation to reflect on our loving response to God on this Stewardship Sunday. Today culminates our focus for this year, in giving our time, our talents and our treasure to God. It has been a time starting on January the 1<sup>st</sup> where we committed to spiritual growth, then at the celebration of Pentecost, in committing to serve God according to our spiritual gifts and now considering our treasure, that is our financial commitment to the parish. This is certainly not a stewardship campaign, no commitment cards to fill out, just a time to consider prayerfully our financial giving for the parish. It is a necessary expression of what we say and believe. It aims to be a lifestyle that places God in the middle of our lives, living as God intended for us as disciples and stewards of God's creation and what we give to God in our time, talent and treasure. Following the service at 10 am you are welcome to join us for a barbecue lunch. Please bring along a salad or a sweet dish to share along with your own drinks.

Our Christian Introductory Course Alpha continues this afternoon at 5 pm in the meeting room adjacent to the church. This afternoon's topic is called "How Does God Guide Us". Another interesting topic where we watch a video and have discussion. It will start with welcome refreshments and a light meal. If you have not been to one of these sessions, you are most welcome. Next Saturday, starting at 9.30 am in St Stephen's Chapel, we will hold a mini retreat or quiet day focussing on the Holy Spirit and what this means to us. The sessions are titled "Who is the Holy Spirit", "What does the Holy Spirit Do" and "How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit". Once again, all are welcome to attend, if it is only for part of the day. Lunch will be provided but if you are able to bring along something to share, that would be great. The day retreat aims to be finished by 3.30 pm. As a result, there will be no Alpha session next Sunday.

Our community seminars continue on Wednesday at 2 pm, the topic being "Waste Management: Which Bin and the Circular Economy". Sarah McConaghy from Burnside Council will present the seminar on how to have best practice regarding waste management, reducing gas emissions and caring for our

environment. The seminar is free and will be followed by afternoon tea. For further information, ring Beth on 8338 7839. There is no need to book, just come along.

Next Sunday, we offer the ministry of healing as part of our 10 am service. Fr Graeme Kaines will be available for anointing and prayers for healing. This is not only for yourself but for someone you know that may like this grace from God, this sacrament of healing. It will be offered during Communion or directly after the service. Fr Graeme is also available Wednesdays and Fridays between 9 am and midday at the church for counselling and pastoral care.

Don't forget in just two weeks' time on Sunday the 1<sup>st</sup> of October at 10 am, it will be the Blessing of the Animals. This is an opportunity to bring your pets along for a blessing and to invite other pet owners to bring them along as well. It's always a wonderful time to give thanks for our animal companions.

It's been decided to postpone our Quiz Night to Friday night the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February. The decision was made at this week's Parish Council, due to various reasons including the short time frame left to organise it and in making a final decision on the recipients of the fundraiser. It was agreed that the funds raised will be split between the Parish and our Parish fundraiser for the year, Newton Theological College in PNG. Speaking of which, the students at the college were most grateful when informed that our Parish was donating money to the college.

I am sure we have all been taken aback by the earthquake in Morrocco and the massive flooding in northern Libya in the past week. A retiring collection will be offered for both disasters for the next two Sundays. Details of the charitable organisation or organisations to donate for both causes are still being finalised.

Your friend and priest,

Paul