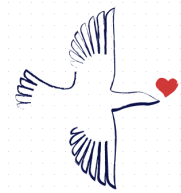


Welcome to Taste and See Taste and See is an initiative of the Outreach Group in the parish. This Bulletin insert is one way of creating wider awareness of the many dimensions of our spiritual lives.

Issue 3



TASTE AND SEE

Visit our new website: tasteandsee.me The picture below shows its home page. The website contains a wide variety of materials about spirituality. It is meant to start conversations. We hope you will visit the website and discuss it with your friends and family. It also contains a special portal for parents of school children, to help them support the spiritual growth of their children.

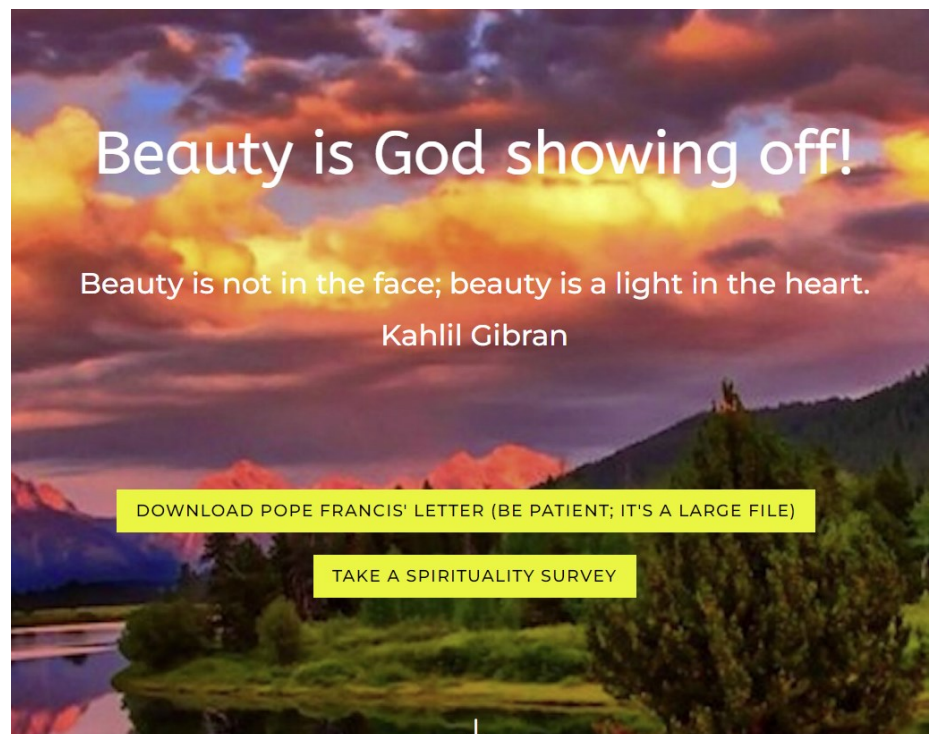
What I learned during COVID

By Jim Brown,

St Anthony's parishioner

There is an old saying: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." During the enforced separations of the lockdowns during the past 2 years, I experienced the truth of this saying. Yes, I connected with people by social media, and even face to face with Zoom and Skype. But I wanted to experience them completely, not transmitted through the Internet. This yearning to be face to face grew as time went by.

This yearning also applied to church. I attended Mass via YouTube, which let me experience the Word and sermons, both from St Anthony's and remotely from the Lismore Cathedral in NSW.



This satisfied some of my desire but left a hole in my relationship with God. There was no Eucharist. I could only join myself to others in a "spiritual communion."

I missed consuming the body and blood of Christ. Trying to substitute for the real physical and spiritual union left me unsatisfied. My absence

from the Eucharist made my heart yearn for more.

This is a very valuable lesson. Receiving Christ's actual body and blood is vital to our health and wellbeing. Maybe I took that great privilege for granted because it was so easy before COVID. Thank God for awakening me again to this vital part of my life.

Combined Parishes Prayer Group offers spiritual strength, support and friendship

At the peak of the pandemic in 2020 and few parishioners from Holy Spirit reached out to the isolated church community and created a sacred space where anyone could call in on a Tuesday morning and pray together. One founder of the group, Pina Di Piero said, "there was listening, caring and praying with equal participation. It reminded me of Jesus' words in Matthew 18:20, for where 2 or 3 gather in my name there am I with them."

"During this time of isolation and uncertainty I found comfort and hope each week, knowing that goodwill, kindness and prayer was being projected outward. Every Tuesday a verse of scripture was chosen and we contemplated on what it meant for us."

Another founder of the group, Max Gomez, said pandemic restrictions contributed to loneliness especially for those living alone and the phone in prayer group brought solace, peace and calmness during those unsettled times. Pina believes the regular

prayer gathering gave participants a sense that "the parish cared and reached out to others in a practical way. There was a sense that we could find some good out of a difficult situation. We often drew strength from Jesus' message of love and compassion toward ourselves and others."

As COVID-19 restrictions lifted and people returned to Mass, the group continued, sure that what they had 'built' during the pandemic was too important to end.

Max said people continue to phone in together each Tuesday because of the spiritual strength the participants receive from the prayer meetings.

"Besides praise and worship, we support each other discussing our challenges and personal issues. We pray for each other during such times. We also discuss the parish activities and our personal plans for the week, which has established a rapport, trust and friendship amongst us. Recently

we met socially at a cafe to establish a personal contact with each other and generate camaraderie and a team spirit," Max said.

Pina and Max would like to thank fellow parishioners Annmarie, Maria, Lana and Margaret for helping with the prayer group and extend a warm invitation to parishioners from all four faith communities to join on a Tuesday. There are no criteria to join, just the use of a phone - mobile or landline in the comfort of your home. Details to connect with us are:

1. **Every Tuesday at 11.30 AM**
2. **Dial : 07-5660 6012**
3. **When prompted by voice recording, enter access code 722762 #**

Cost : cost of a local call



We invite you to submit an article for Taste and See. Please contact Jim Brown if you are interested. Email: jbrown2001@onepost.net