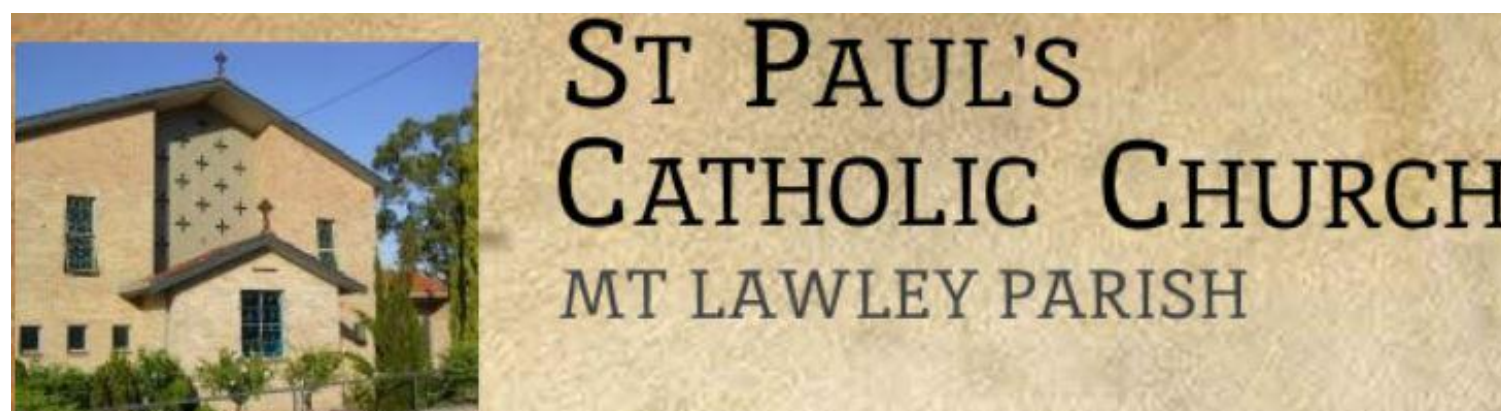


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Dear St Paul's Parishioners, School Staff and Parents –

All of us, I think, have growing concern about the serious conflict between Israel and Palestine. With one front along the Gaza Strip, and another front opening up on the border between Israel and Lebanon, and then Iran's unhelpful hints of its own involvement, this localised conflict could become even more serious and bloody than it already is.

Of course, this situation has only increased world tension about power struggles breaking out into armed conflict as we have seen in Ukraine and Russia. When will we learn that war is rarely a path to peace? Our Lord says: *Those who live by the sword will die by the sword.*

Pope Francis has asked that Catholics around the world make this Friday, 27th October, a **Day of Prayer and Fasting for Peace**. As your spiritual father, I call upon you and all families and individuals in St Paul's Parish to heed the Holy Father's call. What can we do?

- Treat this Friday as we would Ash Wednesday or Good Friday, by **fasting** in the traditional way: one full meatless meal, with one or two small snacks to sustain strength. *This is recommended for those 18 through 59 years of age.*
- Alternatively, at least **abstain from meat** at all your meals on Friday, to unite yourself spiritually to Our Lord, Who gave up His Flesh for us on the Cross.
- Or, at least **abstain from beverages other than water**. Giving up coffee, tea alcohol or soft drinks alone would be a big sacrifice for many!
- **Children and teenagers** could join in this spiritual effort by abstaining from meat and perhaps drinking only water at one of their meals this Friday.

- In terms of prayer, we are having a special **Votive Mass for Peace this Friday** at 5.45pm. Come to church and unite in prayer with Catholics all over the world.
- Our **Year 4 – 5 – 6 school children** will have this Votive Mass for Peace this Thursday at 9.00am in church (their regular day for Mass). You are most welcome.
- A reminder: **the side door of our parish church is open every day** between 9.00am and 6.30pm. If you cannot make it to one of our Votive Masses for Peace, then perhaps **make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament** by dropping into church and observing a few minutes of quiet prayer on your own or with others.
- Parents: you can bring your children – **light a candle** at the shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help: she is the Mother of the Prince of Peace, and Queen of Peace.

In one of her apparitions, Our Lady said: *Don't count on peace treaties made by the rulers of the nations of the world, if you don't have peace in your own families and in your own hearts.*

So perhaps families with children and teenagers could **make time for a discussion at home** this Friday: What are the things we fight about most often? Do we really try to resolve our differences, or do we just 'sweep them under the carpet' after we get tired of fighting – and then have the same problems pop up time and time again? What can we do to grow out of constant disagreements and fighting?

And after this discussion, perhaps **pray a decade of Our Lady's Rosary** – after all, October is the month of the Rosary. It can't hurt – and it can only help!

Please make every effort to heed Pope Francis' call for the entire Universal Church to join in this **Day of Prayer and Fasting for Peace** on Friday. *God bless you!* - Father Tim Deeter

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 Forward



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