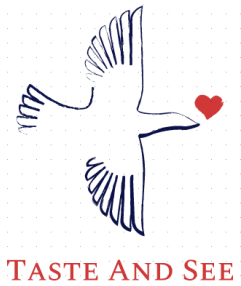


Welcome to Taste and See Taste and See is an initiative of the Outreach Group in the parish. Surveys show that over 80% of baptized Catholics no longer attend Mass regularly. These people are our family and friends and Taste and See is our way of connecting with them, listening to them and inviting them to experience the spiritual life of our parish community. This insert, to be published monthly, is one way of creating wider awareness of the many dimensions of our spiritual lives. Our hope is to start a conversation so we can support each other in our relationships with God.



The four men! by Sister Helen

I had only one errand I needed to do at Northland Shopping Centre. As I left home, I whispered a familiar prayer: 'God let me see Your face today!' When I arrived at Northland, my task was completed in a few moments, but then I realised my return bus would not be available for another forty minutes. It was cold and windy outside. I had brought a book with me, so I headed for the coffee shop and hoped to get a small quiet corner to sip my coffee and have a gentle read.

The waitress saw me looking for a spot and she removed a chair for me to place my wheelchair, close to the counter and facing out to the large Coles Supermarket in front of me! Definitely *not* my hoped-for quiet spot!

Then, before my coffee arrived, I noticed- 'The Four Men!' Their shopping over, they pushed an empty double pram while the elderly grandfather and the father each carried a small boy. They parked their pram and gently secured the little ones inside it!

My coffee arrived. When I looked again the father was at the back of the pram on his cell phone, while Grandpa was bent down, gently feeding one of the little ones. Soon the father finished his call and joined in the feeding. By this time Grandpa was kneeling on the cold stone floor as he fed his little charge! – Not a word spoken -just a silent, natural gesture of commitment. I was touched by the gentleness and love of this scene;

the feminine, nurturing side of these gentlemen.

Yes God! You answered my prayer; I saw Your face! Compassionate, nurturing love feeding my hungry soul. Not just my soul but hundreds of others who saw these gentlemen that day. I prayed they might also experience your touch in their lives.

My coffee finished I left the busy plaza, certain of the touch of God in the ordinary moments of my day. I remembered that beautiful Hymn we sing at church:

O the Love of my God
is the essence

Of all that we love
here on Earth

All the beauty I see
God has given to me

And God's giving is
gentle as silence!



The (not so) hidden presence of God in everyday life by Jim Brown

I have been struck by the strong desire of people to gather and celebrate the Eucharist during the COVID epidemic. How did I encounter this desire? In conversations with people in our parish. Conversations are the hidden presence of God in everyday life.

We should take conversations seriously, as opportunities to talk about important things, including God. Pope Francis says this in his Encyclical *The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)* – Conversation is “bringing the gospel to the people we meet.” But won’t I offend the other person? What would I say? “People don’t like to talk about church and religion.”

All good points. So, why does Pope Francis insist that conversations about God are so important?

Pope Francis sees our situation today as a “burning platform”,

something we cannot ignore and must act to change. “It is undeniable that many people feel disillusioned and no longer identify with the Catholic tradition.” If we don’t converse about the presence of God in our lives, then people who have left the church may never hear about God.

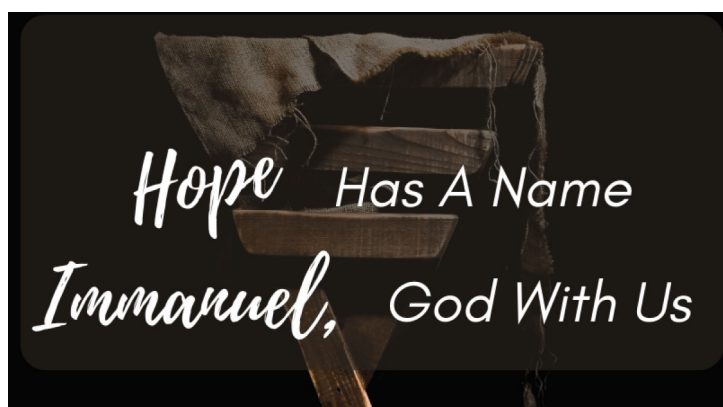
I have led small groups for many years, and I am convinced that the discussions in these groups are vital to creating conversations about God, in several ways:

First, we hear what God is doing in other people’s lives in such small groups, when people share their stories. It is amazing how many people begin to see God’s presence in their own life when they hear what He is doing in others. For example, how my friend handled irritating people at

work with God’s help, enabled me to see opportunities to do the same.

Second, we can teach and encourage each other how to have these conversations about God informally, by sharing our experiences. We are all people facing the same challenge, and learn from each other how to listen, empathise and be open to the Holy Spirit in such conversations.

There are several small groups in our parish, which I encourage you to join. There is a home church called Oikos, of which I am a member. It meets once week. There are other discussion and mediation groups that you can consider. Please contact the parish Office to find out about these.



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