

ST PAT'S MATTERS

A magazine for parishioners and friends of St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta



Plenary Council 2020

'Listen to what the Spirit is saying...' REV 2:7

**WHAT DO YOU THINK
GOD IS ASKING OF US
IN AUSTRALIA AT THIS TIME?**

YOUR VOICE MATTERS



Feb., 2019 | Issue 97

Join other parishioners on March 1st
to discuss the above question More details back page.

Editorial

We are well into 2019, the Christmas holiday break is now but a memory; most adults are back to the usual routine of work; children have returned to school to face new teachers and advance to higher grades; at the Cathedral we have slipped back into the normal round of liturgical life and ministry.

It's all part of the cycle of our life's journey. And articles in this issue are evidence of that. Fr Chris del Rosario has journeyed from seminarian to deacon to priesthood, while Fr Michael Gitau has gone from Parramatta to Springwood via Kenya!

Silvana Rechichi takes us on a journey to St Patrick's Cemetery to remember those buried within and Judith Dunn unfolds the historical importance of this sacred place.

Some of our youth have made pilgrimages of discovery and discernment — Genevieve Lee to the Northern Territory, then with five others to World Youth Day in Panama.

Mark Slee writes of the journey a gifted voice has led a former Cathedral choir cantor, Stephanie Poropat, to undertake.

You will be touched by Rod Hilliker's detailed account of the journey he and fellow war veterans made to East Timor.

A women's evening retreat focusing on Eileen O'Connor's spirituality and achievements, despite physical disabilities, was a lesson in how one can overcome life's challenges when God is kept in the picture.

Meg Gale notes the progress of the children's journey in the Sacraments of Initiation and Olivia Lee looks at the vital role of Confession in our spiritual lives.

Our life's path is strengthened by faith formation and prayer — Michael & Marietta Guillema and Bernadette Ching show ways of achieving this.

I leave you to ponder that important question: *What do you think God is asking of St Pat's People at this time?* It's our chance to voice our beliefs in preparation for the Australian Bishops' Plenary Council in 2020. Be part of the parish's **Listening and Dialogue Session on 1st March**.

In every circumstance of daily life let our actions be always Spirit-led.

M. Polizzi

PRIESTLY MATTERS

Farewell to Fr Michael



Gaudete Sunday, 2018 brought a contradiction of emotions to St Patrick's parishioners. We were joyful because celebration of the Messiah's Birth was drawing closer, but sad that Fr Michael's ministry amongst us was to end with the advent of Christmas. So a communal farewell took place in the Cloister Café after 11am Mass.

He has been reassigned as assistant priest to St Thomas Aquinas Parish, Springwood, but after leaving us he was flying off to Kenya to reconnect with his family, returning early February to take up his new posting.

Naturally there were lots of individual goodbyes and personal expressions of gratitude to Father Michael for his short tenure ministering to St Pat's parishioners. (His is a history of three brief encounters with the cathedral parish, two ultra short stints of about 3 months with the final one just under a year.)

Fr Bob began the gathering by expressing his gratitude to Fr Michael for his assistance in serving the parish community. Then Fr Michael, after responding with his thanks and reflecting briefly on his time amongst us, took on the task of cutting his celebratory cake, which Cathy Dearie then so expertly divided up to share around.

To be sure our loss is Springwood's gain.

Father, our prayers go with you. God bless and guide your ministry always. Ever gracious, Fr Michael happily posed for photos: group and individual ones.



Enthusiastic Hospitality Team members corner Fr Michael for a photo.



Fr Michael with fellow Kenyan, Sally Ngumba, and being plied with a farewell gift from Anna Bui.



and again with Marietta & Michael Guillema, Frank Duff and Ian Gilbertson.

Photos: Martin Graham

Welcome Fr Chris

We asked Fr Chris to write a brief biopic for St Pat's Matters, and appreciate his accommodating the request, particularly since as a 'new kid on the block' learning the ropes, he must be full on as he begins his first appointment as a newly ordained priest.

Father, may your time of priestly ministry in St Pat's Parish be blessed by God as a long and fruitful one.

*To the community of
St Patrick's Cathedral Parramatta,*

My name is Fr Christopher del Rosario. I'm one of the newly ordained priests here in this diocese and I'm also the new assistant priest here at the Cathedral Parish. Being appointed here at this Parish somewhat feels like coming home as I served here on occasion during my time at the seminary. That being said this is still a new environment for me, so please forgive me if I'm not up to speed with how things go. Nevertheless, with the grace of God, I will strive to be a worthy priest of Jesus Christ so that I may serve you all with charity.

A little bit about myself, I'm an Australian with Filipino heritage, a son to two loving parents and one of nine children. I attended school at Redfield College, graduating in 2010.

In 2011 I took up a degree in Chiropractic Science at Macquarie University which I thoroughly enjoyed. That same year I was blessed to be part of World Youth Day in Madrid as a representative of my parish, Our Lady of the Angels, Rouse Hill. During that time I felt God was calling me to something more, to follow Him in a radical yet wonderful way.

This turned out to be a vocation to the priesthood which I pursued as I was accepted into Holy Spirit Seminary, Parramatta beginning in 2012. Seven years later I was blessed to be ordained a priest of Jesus Christ on the 30th of November, 2018.

As I begin my new appointment here in this wonderful Cathedral Parish I ask that you all pray for me – In doing so I know God will grant me the graces to serve you all in love.

*May God bless you all.
Fr. Chris*

✠ Ordination Matters ✠



In his ordination to the Priesthood, Fr Chris received one of the seven Sacraments —that of Holy Orders.

And since he has written an introductory letter here, it was deemed appropriate to include images of him at significant moments during that sacred ritual last November, at which he and 3 fellow deacons were ordained to the priesthood.



VARIOUS MATTERS displaying the SPIRIT of CHRISTMAS



Vinnies helps out over Christmas- A HUGE 'Thank You' to St Patrick's Primary School and our Parish Community

In December, with the lead up to Christmas, St Patrick's Vinnies Team had a busy end to 2018 due to the usual surge in demand for assistance over this period, combined with preparation and delivery of Christmas Hampers as well as the Annual Christmas Appeal to organise.

Goods for the Christmas Hamper were very generously donated through the efforts of St Patrick's Primary School staff, students and parents. The quantity and quality of the food and grocery items donated meant that our Vinnies Team could prepare a range of amazing hampers for distribution to the St Vincent de Paul client base. The hampers, targeted to local Parramatta families in need, especially those with small children, were very well received and have made a real difference to many struggling families.

Additional food and grocery items were later transported to the Harris Park Hub, where they have been utilised in their work providing support to the broader community and surrounding parish families.

The Annual Vinnies' Christmas Appeal in late December was very well supported by St Pat's Community. The funds raised will be invaluable in providing a wide range of assistance to families and individuals in need of a helping hand over the months ahead. Thank you to St Pat's parishioners for your ongoing support, both monetary and in sharing your valuable time to help in many instances.

Our thanks also to Fr Bob and the hard-working Parish Staff for your continued assistance in these projects — your support makes the task a lot easier.

Keen to donate? Place offerings in the Vinnies Donation Box in the Narthex, or alternatively you can use the envelopes provided.

The Vinnies Team

Ed note: But wait, there more! See pics on the last page.



Kayleigh (L) and her Mum Felicia (R), members of our Hospitality Team, crafted lovely Christmas table decorations, which they sold at Morning Tea on Gaudete Sunday. The \$60 made was donated to the parish to buy supplies for the Café. In between them is Daisy Neroy, whose amazing story by son Brian featured in our last issue.

On Saturday 8th December, people were invited to enjoy **Carols in the Cathedral**. The programme included performances by children from St Patrick's Primary and members of Credo Youth Ministries.

The Carols were interspersed with appropriate readings from Scripture and reflections delivered by Credo Youth.

Thanks for all the preparation and practice behind the scenes, beforehand.

A casual BBQ in the Cloister followed (thanks to the BBQ team). And naturally, much to the children's delight, the evening's finale was the visit from Santa.



ZDENKA BARICENE TO THE RESCUE!!

Each time she visited the Chapel in the weeks before Christmas, Zdenka was dismayed that the Tree beside the Nativity Scene remained sadly devoid of any trim. Finally, just days beforehand, she took on the challenge of buying decorations and "bejewelling the tree" as a worthy tribute in celebrating the Birth of The Messiah. What a blessing such parishioners are!

Giving Christmas Cheer Matters



Over the three Sundays of Advent, 9th, 16th and 23rd December, a group of parishioners sang carols at *Lillian Wells, Marian, and Arcare* Nursing Homes respectively. (Our priests and ministers visit these homes regularly to say Mass, give Holy Communion and pray with the residents.) Prior to each afternoon visit, the Carollers met in the Cathedral hall for practice sessions.

Marietta Guillema explains how these visits came about.

Sally Ngumba talks about her carolling experience:

When Marietta pulled me aside one Sunday at the Cloister Café after the morning tea and asked me to join them in singing, I was not sure what I was signing myself up for. Later, I found out that we were rehearsing Christmas Carols to sing to the residents of a nursing home.

I was instantly very grateful for the opportunity to actually do something meaningful for others, especially at Christmas, which should be a time to love, share and give back.

What I was not prepared for however, was the joy it brought me to actually see these lovely residents of the Nursing Home happily singing along and how touched they were that people cared enough to remember them. Their joyful reaction encouraged me to participate in this beautiful cause during the next Sunday's visit to another Nursing Home. I can honestly say that this is one of the best experiences I have had so far this year. It was fulfilling and heart-warming; and I hope that our group made a positive impact for the elderly during this Christmas period. Their joy touched my heart and I am completely fulfilled.

I thank Marietta and the Parish Team very much for this opportunity to serve my community and I really hope that we can reach out like this every year.



Michael, my husband and I have always had the desire to dedicate time to bringing Christmas joy to the elderly whenever we can, by visiting local nursing homes to sing carols to the residents. With this in mind, last year we extended an



Marietta at left and Sally at right bookend the other carollers.

invitation to St Pat's parishioners to join us in the venture. We realised getting volunteers would not be easy because people are caught up with preparation for Christmas. Nevertheless, those people who accepted our invitation found both satisfaction and deep joy in spending time with the elderly, whose enthusiasm and happiness singing along with us was an emotionally moving experience. It touched our hearts to such an extent that we all aspire to joining forces to do this every year during Advent. We are grateful to parishioners and St Patrick's *Live Christ Share Christ (LCSC)* movement, through whose combined support the dream was realised. We also thank Fr Bob, St Patrick's staff, and most of all, God, for this wonderful opportunity.



AN EVENING SPIRITUAL RETREAT FOR WOMEN

This retreat, held on Saturday October 13th last year, focused on the spirituality and life of Little Mother Eileen.'

Jocelyn Hedley, renowned author and researcher of Eileen's life, guided those present through the struggles, strength and feminine genius of this amazing woman, whose case for Sainthood is currently being promoted.

Bishop Vincent popped in to listen to Jocelyn speak and bought a copy of her book, *'And here begin the work of Heaven.'*



These women's comments below are a gauge of the evening's success

Donna Missio:

I want to say how impressed I was by the guest speaker, Jocelyn Hedley; renowned author. Jocelyn's own life has been very much affected by her meeting Our Lady's Nurses of the Poor and their request for her to research and write a book on Eileen O'Connor's spirituality. This has led to Jocelyn converting to Catholicism and a deepening of her own spirituality. Hopefully Eileen O'Connor's call to sainthood will also help to promote the Order she co-founded with Fr Edward McGrath and perhaps encourage more young women to consider joining her Nursing Order.

Pat Preca:

It was hard to know what to expect at this Women's Spirituality Night. We were treated to an account of Eileen O'Connor's history and works. We also came to learn how Jocelyn, the guest speaker was 'chosen' to write the book. We say 'the Holy Spirit is at work again', or 'the planets are aligned'. Well, listening to Jocelyn, I was convinced the Holy Spirit was definitely at work here.

She spoke of how she was to visit 35 Dudley St Coogee. This is where Eileen co-founded and coordinated the Order, 'Our Lady's Nurses for the Poor' You, too, can visit this house and be transported back in time by the memorabilia on display from Eileen's time there. This project was the beginning of a special bond between Jocelyn and the sisters who still work from this house. They were looking for someone to write a book and Jocelyn, unbeknown to herself at the time was also looking for something. And the rest is history.



Pat in her "Welcoming Role"

Lisa Arrantz

When I went to the Women's Spirituality Night, there was very little that I knew about Eileen O'Connor, let alone all the suffering she endured in the short time frame of her life. Three main points stood out for me. One was the parallels between Eileen's life and that of our first saint, Mary Mackillop. Both women founded religious congregations which served the poor, Eileen founded *Our Lady's Nurses to the Poor* and St Mary Mackillop founded *Sisters of the Sacred Heart*. Both women endured cruel allegations against them, which were proven to be false; both women leaned on their faith to draw strength and continue to follow Christ in their vocational callings.

The second point that stood out for me was the physical suffering that Eileen endured. After severely damaging her spine at the tender age of three, Eileen spent most of her life bedridden and unable to walk, yet despite this she never saw herself as a victim but rather a Servant of God whose mission was to offer her suffering to God as a way to save souls. She then established *Our Lady's Nurses to the Poor* who were to serve those with severe ailments like Eileen and to provide respite and hospitable care to the less fortunate.

The third point that struck me was that in the 1960s there was a push to make Eileen a saint. This was unsuccessful and it is only recently that there has been a resurgence to renew that push to have Eileen proclaimed a saint.

Eileen would make the perfect saint for our modern times. She embodies everything that society deems as being "unsuitable". The first negative: being a severely disabled young woman, who would need 24 hour care, suffering from tuberculous osteomyelitis or Potts Disease, having her ribs crush down into her pelvis she would have made the perfect candidate for a pregnancy termination, yet God worked through her to bring about peace and joy to everyone that met her, as well as those who crossed paths with *Our Lady's Nurses to the Poor*. Another negative: Eileen wasn't a woman of great beauty, yet all who knew her were devoted to her. In today's society, where beauty standards go by how much flesh is shown, needing to spend hours doing make up, perfecting hair and creating a social media reality which in itself is so warped by how we want people to perceive our "glamorous" life, we should look to Eileen and see that she did not need to engage with any of society's standards to go out into the world and make a difference, even if that difference was only a small one.

We should look to Eileen's humility as an example of how to live our lives. In her words: **Be pure in your person, be clean, be modest, be reserved... nature in itself, and as it intended to be, is grand, is a blessing, is joy, is life, is a way to God.**

Parish Pastoral Council Matters



EILEEN'S MEDITATION on OUR LADY'S LOVE

was chosen for reflection.



Think of Our Lady's love and how She persevered to the end. Think of Her at the foot of the Cross. She could not ease the pain. She could do nothing. She stayed loving to the end, forgetting self, dangers, all was forgotten more in Her love than in Her sorrow. See how She followed Our Lord to Calvary, and stood at the foot of the Cross. She never failed, she always went on, ever persevering in Her love, in Her thought of God and of souls.

So you must will to go on loving God, helping others.

FAVOUR: Ask for power to help others

RESOLUTION: And promise like Her to always be found at your post, ever to be kind, forgetful of self, loving. Again when you are tired, or feel that you must fail, look to the sufferings of others, the love of others, or their trust, and it will bring to mind His love, His pain, all He has done, will do and is doing for souls, for you, and, like Our Lady, you will stand at the foot of the Cross, that is your thoughts will be of Him, His love, His sufferings, they will follow Him, and so rest on souls, on helping them, and they, with and of Him, you will love Him.

Below: just some of the evening's attendees: Guess who's the odd one out at a Women's Spirituality Occasion?



AN UPDATE:

Victoria Ikutegbe had not long been elected to the newly formed PPC when in late October last year she sent Fr Bob the following email:



Hi Fr Bob,

I am writing to inform you that I have just been offered a position as a Senior Research Officer with the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly and will be moving to Darwin as a result, on 3rd November, 2018 (next weekend). It is very short notice but it appears the position needs to be filled as soon as possible, hence the quick move.

I appreciate all that you do at the Cathedral Parish, especially in relation to Faith Formation, and will sorely miss you and all the friends I have been fortunate to make during my time here.

I ask for your prayers as I embark on this new chapter of my life, as I will be praying for God's blessings on you as you continue to shepherd His people with love.

May the good Lord continue to bless and strengthen you and the parishioners in all your endeavours.

Yours in Christ,
Victoria Ikutegbe
26th October

WELCOME TO ALAN D'SOUZA



For a couple of years my beautiful wife Andrea and I have called Australia home. When we first moved to Sydney we belonged to St Patrick's Cathedral Parish because of its proximity to where we lived. Reflecting on our past and seeing God's hand leading us, we feel really blessed to have met so many parishioners with whom we've had a chance to share our lives.

While the *Live Christ Share Christ* monthly formation teachings have been the core of our service to the parish, God continually amazes me with more opportunities to be of service to Him and the Church.— one Saturday morning, Fr Bob asked me if I was keen to join the Parish Pastoral Council in place of our friend Victoria who was leaving Sydney for her new job assignment. At once I felt as if the Lord had granted me yet another opportunity to be of service and I said 'Yes' to that call.

I had some idea of what was expected of PPC members, but more importantly I began praying, asking God what His will was for me. I have only been to one meeting and am still discerning how best I can serve the parish community; but I know that making myself available to the parish is the very first step to this calling.

I am very excited about this year's pastoral theme for the parish – Evangelisation. It gives me yet another platform to help grow and strengthen myself, my growing family, the extended family as well as the parish community in faith, hope and love.



ALL SOULS DAY 2018
ST PATICK'S CEMETERY, PARRAMATTA

people from disparate cultures, by virtue of their burial in this cemetery, each and every one equal before the Lord:
"remember that from dust you were created, and unto dust you will return."

Let us honour all our forebears, of every nation, language, culture and tradition, in a prayer of remembrance. And may peace, justice and reconciliation flourish in this Land of the Southern Cross of the Holy Spirit, our common home.



SILVANA RECHICHI reflects on this special day.

"The Christian meaning of death is revealed in the Paschal Mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ in whom resides our only hope.

The Christian who dies in Christ Jesus is 'away from the body and at home with the Lord' (2 Cor 5:8)

-Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1681-



Each 2nd of November on **All Souls Day**, some old and some new faces gather together to celebrate this memorial in honour of all our faithful departed, remembering in particular members of our families, relations and friends who have gone before us. We are thankful to Fr. George for celebrating the Mass this year, Annette Hartman for assisting and to all gathered together to pray and remember those buried here, and for all our beloved departed wherever in Australia or around the World they have been laid to rest.

There is something "special" in celebrating the Sacrifice of the Mass at a cemetery, but particularly so at St Patrick's Cemetery, North Parramatta.

History as "old as time", the history of our *First Nations People*, is forever fused with the more "recent" history of the British "Colonizers" of this Ancient Land, known to us "westerners" as the Land of the Southern Cross of the Holy Spirit. Here, among the trees, one can almost feel their presence in their daily struggles: one people struggling to survive what became the systemic deprivation of a familiar way of life, languages, cultures and traditions. The other trying to survive the tyranny of distance from all that was familiar, far away from family and friends, to a place where they tried to recreate and adapt a "British-centric" way of life in a land "so foreign and so harsh" and so far removed from the "green and pleasant land" they once knew and would never see again.

This place is Holy Ground, a Sacred Place where

Let our prayers fulfil the vision of the prophet Isaiah:

"In those days:

The Spirit from on high will be poured out on us.

Then will the desert become an orchard and the orchard regarded as a forest.

Right will dwell in the desert and justice abides in the orchard. Justice will bring about peace;

Right will produce calm and security.

My people will live in a peaceful country, in secure dwellings and quiet resting places." (Isaiah 32:15-18)

***Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord.
And let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. Amen***



Sharon and her daughter, Cheryl were happy to be photographed.

Silvana commented:
At such tender age this little girl, by her active participation and prayerful actions before the Blessed Sacrament, showed a "liturgical" understanding well beyond her years, I was going to take a photo of her kneeling before the Blessed Eucharist, but I decided against it, as it seemed an intrusion into her personal dialogue with our Lord.

JUDITH DUNN OAM FPDHS has written a book on St Patrick's Cemetery and has for over 30 years taken an interest in the conservation of this most historic cemetery. She worked on the *Friends of St Patrick's Cemetery Committee*, now defunct, and contacts Council with any issues and oversees plaques being installed. She has offered to follow in future issues with biographies of people buried in St Pat's — some of them great characters.



there died in the factory, 44 male and 36 female children." Just a bulk entry without recording any individual names. Migration patterns can be discerned, many names showing Irish origin but also evident are French, German and Italian names. The beginning of different cultures inter marrying are shown in

St Patrick's Cemetery encapsulates and reflects the character of the growing town of Parramatta, giving us a real picture of what was going on in the area at a given time. It shows us the people, their nationalities, local work trends, prosperity or poverty, how the people were living. Yet most of us seldom think of pioneer members of the parish who were lovingly laid to rest in our own "God's Acre".

Cemeteries are places of cultural significance for their aesthetic, scientific, social and historic values for the past, present and future.

Aesthetic Value— meaning the colour and texture of materials and fabric. The stone that has been quarried locally then shaped and inscribed. The way these fit in with the landscape as they age and become covered in a variety of coloured lichens. The metal of the grave surrounds, hand wrought by local blacksmiths, sometimes stamped with the blacksmith's name. Words deeply incised in English, Latin and Italian. Trees planted in the 1950s by Scouts and the Rotary Club during volunteer landscaping, add to the pleasantness of our surroundings.

Scientific Value – the research, rarity and quality of the data. Hand written burial registers with columns listing not just names but where these people lived, their profession or calling, the ship they arrived on, whether convict or free. Pathetically young ages or surprisingly old, at least two living to over a hundred years. Sometimes a brief subjective note about the person that illuminates a little more of their life: *Abode Female Factory, Lunatic, Married to a Jew*. The pathos of one entry which records, "in this year

delightful names such as Bridget Ah Chin.

Social Value – meaning the focus of spiritual and cultural sentiment. Strolling among the memorials reading biblical and cautionary verse was a socially acceptable pastime on Sundays. Verses such as, "Watch, for ye know not the hour" and "As I am so you must be, prepare yourselves to follow me".

Traditional cemetery symbolism includes the avenue of funeral cypress which adds to the solemnity of the surrounds and leads to the final resting place. Gothic door and windows in the chapel whose very shape points towards God. Much of the carved symbolism relates to biblical themes: — The Lamb of God, carved anchors from St Paul's writing of the anchor of hope; torches are also



attributed to St Paul and his metaphor of running the race;



doves symbolise the Holy Spirit; and the cross of faith often stands on the three steps of faith, hope and charity. Culture is also evident in the almost puckish, Irish humour even if it is unintentional – George O'Neil who died of a slight injury and a lady buried beneath her husband (two deep in the usual way) whose epitaph reads, "here I

lie beneath the mouldering sod." Migration patterns are revealed by the memorials to German, Italian, French, Irish and Chinese.

Historical Value – embraces the stories of all those buried here ranging from heroic to pathetic to ridiculous. **Senior Sergeant Kelly** who helped solve the Parramatta River Murders, **Patrick Hayes**, Inspector of Nuisances for Parramatta Council who was caught illegally distilling spirits, **John Lacey**, who leased his land to the town as a race track for 25 years, **Mr Allen** who put his wife up as a stake in a game of cards and lost her, **Monsignor Rigney**, pioneer priest of the Illawarra, **Daniel Flinn** the peg-legged tailor of Parramatta, **Vincenzo Chiodetti** who arrived as the bandmaster for the 73rd Regiment, several politicians, **Mayor Hugh Taylor**, and lastly **John Hodges** who ran an inn in town (now Brislington) complete with ladies of ill repute.

The earliest headstones date from 1824 but the burial ground was operating earlier than that. Surveyor General Mitchell noted John Oxley was desirous of taking the land from the Catholics as it was much too valuable a site for them, but before the next survey the priest had fenced the land and claimed squatter's rites as he had possession of the ground for 12 years. There are roughly 1,200 known burials, many in unmarked graves.

The Mortuary Chapel is the oldest such chapel in Australia dating from 1844 and erected in honour of Thomas Francis McCarthy, the second Capuchin priest to come to Australia. Five Ministers who died in office in Parramatta are buried within. By 1968 Parramatta Council wanted to resume all of the cemeteries originally on the outskirts of town, but now surrounded by houses. This was for hygiene reasons as it was feared seepage from the cemeteries would cause illness and disease.

In May 1975 the deed of gift giving the cemetery land to the Council was finalised but not without some angst within the church congregation.

Cont'd on page 17

Thanking Volunteers Matters



Sometime last September, an invitation was sent out to all volunteers from *St Patrick's Cathedral Staff*

WE JUST WANT TO SAY
Thank You
 FOR YOUR SUPPORT THIS YEAR
 PLEASE JOIN US FOR DINNER
 Friday November 16
 7:00pm to 10:00pm
 Cloister Function Room

So who received an invite?:

acolytes, altar servers, readers, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, members of children's liturgy, St Vincent de Paul, and hospitality teams, welcomers, catechists, wardens, collectors, counters, prayer group leaders, palm gatherers.

And, Oh, what a night it was!

To begin, The Dean, Fr Bob welcomed everyone thanking them for their service to the parish in a variety of ministries.

The one hundred or so in attendance were treated to a fine array of pre-dinner appetisers — cheese and fruit platters, fresh prawns, biscuits and dips, all on offer with a selection of wines and other beverages. Then came the buffet, made all the more enjoyable having it served on crockery plates, provided with real cutlery! (Thumbs up from the Greenies!) Then to round off, the sweet-tooths were faced with several dessert choices. What a delicious dilemma!

Good food, good company, convivial atmosphere, but what made the occasion all the more memorable and special was



the cheerful service of Cathedral Staff members, (not to mention all the time spent beforehand in preparation.) Here they are taking a well-earned breather: from back L-R: Mili Lee, Olivia Lee, Mindy Mercado, Pat Preca, Meg Gale, Matt Bretania, Chris Ohlsen, Willie Limjap, Dominic Franssen and 'The Boss', Fr Bob.

Well done, Good Servants!



Sacramental Programme

Meg Gale, Coordinator reporting



Olivia Lee, Parish Events Co-Ordinator, wrote the following insightful reflection on Confession whilst still a 23-year old student at Campion College 4 years ago. She had been 'commissioned' by Fr Andrew Bass, then Administrator of St Pat's, to write a series of reflections on the 7 Sacraments to be published in the Sunday Bulletins, one per week.

RECONCILIATION 2018

On the evening of Tuesday 27th November the children preparing for First Eucharist approached the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. Families, teachers from St Patrick's Primary and the team came together to pray as a community, while our candidates opened their hearts and encountered Jesus in this sacrament of healing that forgives sins and restores grace.

The Sacramental Team is preparing just over 70 children to receive First Eucharist this year and continues to assist in the preparation of the children from St Oliver's Parish, Harris Park (20 children have registered from St Oliver's Primary School). As we journey with our families we would like to thank you, the St Pat's parishioners for the prayer support which gives us all — families and team alike — the grace and strength we need to continue in the journey to completion of the Sacraments of Initiation.

Prayer Cards for Children Preparing for First Eucharist

Maybe you noticed the prayer card station in the Cathedral narthex last October? Many thanks to our parishioners who took a prayer card at that time and are specifically praying for one of our candidates as they prepare to receive Jesus for the first time. For anyone who missed out on a prayer card they will be available again when we restart the programme.

The prayer cards have been specially designed by the team and are printed here in the parish.

The Programme in Preparation for Eucharist restarts on Tuesday 5th February, at 7:30pm in the Cathedral Hall.

For the first four weeks, meetings will focus on "**Remembering Baptism**"; then the next 3 weeks' sessions on the Sacrament of Eucharist, followed by a practice session for receiving Eucharist, the second Sacrament of Initiation, which the children will receive on the Feast of Corpus Christi, 23rd June at 9:30am Sunday Mass.

Editor's Note:

Meg's report on the Children receiving First Reconciliation was an ideal chance to feature the adjacent article on Confession by Olivia Lee.

Snippets of Sacraments:

CONFESSION

Perhaps the most confronting thing about walking into the Blessed Sacrament Chapel is the silence.

Have you ever heard the silence? You walk towards the doors of the Cathedral and sirens pierce the air, music is blaring, people are laughing — these are the sounds of life.

Then you walk through the doors, into the Chapel, and the noise is stolen by the silence.

With the life of the world being so loud and full of activity, it's no wonder that so many people profess a relationship with God as being between "just me, and God" — no one else is needed, because everyone else is so busy. But in the silence of His house waits a God longing for the thoughts of their hearts to be shared with Him.

So it seems then, that it's not a matter of — "I don't need anyone else, my faith is just between me and God", but it is more so — "my faith is just between me and God, because **no one else needs me**".

Countless times this pain disordered our perception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where shame weakens our confidence to admit our guilt, so we dodge the lines at the confessional and hide from God.

Sin though, is never a choice made that harms the relationship between you and God only.

At your baptism, the whole Church body stood with you, rejoicing at your entrance into the family, and together you made a vow to reject Satan and all his works and empty promises — and you did same at the baptism of others in our Church. If these vows make us one, then the breaking of them by one, hurts us all.

Think of our earthly families. Whenever one of the children broke the

rules, then everyone didn't get ice cream (special thanks to my younger brothers for putting me through this pain). As the perpetrator, watching everyone else suffer because of you, hurts. As the innocent, suffering for something you didn't do hurts, but not as much as seeing your brother or sister suffer alone. Through this all, stands the parent unconditionally loving their child, but happy with their apology, because the recognition of wrong creates a united conviction on what is good, right, and true.

It is so difficult though to expose and confess your vulnerability — perhaps in hiding it from God, you have also hidden the gravity of it from yourself?

But remember, the gravity of your sin diminishes in the forgiveness of God.

The Sacrament of Penance directly speaks to our desire to be unconditionally loved; it restores us to communion with God's grace, joining us with Him in the most beautiful, intimate friendship.

Reconciliation awakens us in a spiritual resurrection where the trust of our vulnerability is laid at the feet of God, and the sorrow of our heart is met with the promise of pardon and peace. Cleansed and one with God, we also become one with our brothers and sisters, and one with ourselves, regaining the innermost truth of our dignity.

Our Church needs you. Yes, it is you and God *first*, but it is never you and God *alone*. It is you, and the Church, with God, *together*.

Next time the noise of the world drowns out your ability to remember God's forgiveness, step into the silence. Remember the promise of pardon and peace, and as Christ did in Matthew's Gospel, (28:16-20) tell God: ***all I have is yours, in you I am glorified.***

Bucking the Trend matters

A Schoolies that I'll always remember and never regret.

Travel with Genevieve Lee, Credo Youth member and WYD Panama pilgrim, to find out why she made the above comment.

Schoolies week. Perhaps the most anticipated week for high school graduates around Australia. Some kids remain close to home, whilst others voyage to the legendary Surfers Paradise and other sleepy coastal towns, in hopes of making memories that will hopefully last a lifetime. But for me and my two friends Sina and Justin, we had the option to skip out on a week of drunken shenanigans, to instead spend a week in the Northern Territory.

Each of us were approached by the New South Wales Treasurer, Dominic Perrotet in early June with the offer to attend his annual *Hawkesbury Hills Student Leader Service Project* to the Northern Territory, from the 24th–30th November, 2018.

After accepting this offer, we attended monthly mentor dinners that featured a speech from notable Australians such as business man David Gonski, fashion designer Carla Zampatti and Bunnings CEO Micheal Schneider. These mentor dinners served as a social space to meet and form friendships with the other 24 student leaders with whom we would be travelling, as well as a space to develop our leadership skills.

As we left the cool winds of Sydney behind, we were soon met with the unforgiving heat of the Australian outback three hours later when we landed at Alice Springs Airport in Yulara. Our seven-day stay would be dedicated to painting and restoring the classrooms at the Imanpa and Yulara campuses of Nyangatjatjara College. Our first three days were spent at the Yulara campus. It was here that we re-painted their three classrooms that had not been renovated in 20 years! We also had the opportunity to meet with school kids and participate in the 8am school pick-up in the Mutijulu Community, which is usually closed off to visitors.

Each night we slept on the basketball court of the school in swags and sleeping bags, and watched the sun rise of Uluru each morning as we woke up to work.

Our next two days were spent at the Imanpa campus which was a two-hour drive from Yulara. Here, we continued to restore the classrooms, but also restored their kitchen facilities and put on a barbeque for the community of 20 people. Whilst at the Imanpa and Yulara campuses we had the opportunity to work with the students in their music and art classes, talking with them about their experiences of being a teenager in such a different climate from the one we were raised in.

To be able to have conversations throughout the trip with both the staff and students, on the challenges they faced trying to provide and attain an education in an isolated area, truly provided a perspective on how lucky I was to be in the Northern Territory after completing thirteen years of schooling. It became apparent that formal education was not encouraged within the communities, as we watched only 5 kids, and sometimes even less, come to school each day. To hear the stories of how each staff member found their way to the red dirt of the Northern Territory was amazing; but to hear how they found a reason and passion to stay was truly heart-warming. By learning more about their stories, it nurtured the appreciation I have for all the teachers and those people who invested in me as a student. I don't think I fully realised just how lucky I am to be able to be a high school graduate, and to be able to pursue further education, until I saw the lack of opportunity that kids in these communities face.

To spend seven days in these



13 year old Jumaaran and myself at the Imanpa campus of Nyangatjatjara College

schools, surrounded by beautiful kids and the dedicated staff members of Nyangatjatjara College, was truly a privilege. As I reflect upon my time spent there playing soccer games, having every white shirt I took be stained orange, and staying up till the early hours of the morning singing and laughing with my fellow leaders, I feel an immense longing to go back. It was a thrilling experience and **a schoolies that I'll always remember and never regret.**



Nyangatjatjara College:
1 of 3 classrooms at the Imanpa campus



My team of leaders at the completion of painting the classrooms at the Yulara Campus.



Pilgrims Progress



Prayer Book

As a way of taking the community of St. Patrick's on their journey, the pilgrims have created this prayer book.

We invite you to write down any prayer intentions you may have as they take this along with them on their journey to Panama, through the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe and many others.

Join us on Sunday 13th January at 9:30am for the Pilgrims Commissioning Mass where this book will be presented to take with them.

A sample of prayers

Please pray for the youth of Parramatta, that they may be active in their spirituality and faith in God and the church.

Please pray for our military veterans who are suffering from mental health diseases & issues, who are forgotten members of society.

Please pray that our governments will take greater responsibility of these valued members of our society who pay for their lives, our freedom.

14/12/18 S. Sinclair (Caringford)

please pray for peace in the world specially in Lebanon and for all the politicians to have conscience and act as they should Jesus hear our prayer

14.12.18 D. Gittany (North Parramatta)

Please pray for the unity of families and for sinners to come back to Jesus

During 9:30am Sunday Mass on January 13th, Bishop Vincent commissioned the 6 St Pat's pilgrims going to World Youth Day. He also presented them with the Prayer Book containing prayer requests. The book had been on view in the narthex (see right) Just a few of the numerous prayers people wrote are included for you to read.



On 16th January the pilgrims, brimming with excitement, left on a jet plane bound for Panama. As this issue is being distributed, the young pilgrims will be homebound, if not already, back on Aussie soil.

WE'VE LOTS OF QUESTIONS TO ASK!!

- ◆ WHAT WAS PANAMA LIKE?
- ◆ WHAT WERE SOME OF THE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES EXPERIENCED?
- ◆ WHAT WAS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE?
- ◆ HOW HAS WYD DEEPENED YOUR FAITH?
- ◆ WHAT LIFE-CHANGING EFFECT WILL WYD HAVE ON YOUR FUTURE LIFE?
- ◆ WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON LEARNT?

We look forward to reading their testimonials in the next issue of St Pat's Matters

God has blessed me with an unexpected pregnancy. I'm due on the 25th of January ²⁰¹⁹ and quite scared of the delivery. Please pray for a safe delivery for my new family and most especially for those who are finding it hard to conceive or who are tempted to abort. Please ~~ask~~ ask for the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Thank You, God Bless.

Voice Matters

MARK SLEE has known Stephanie Jennifer Poropat for a number of years and has followed the unfolding of her singing career with great interest. At our request he doffed a 'reporter's hat' to interview Stephanie about her God-given talent and to enlighten St Pat's parishioners about the path upon which her remarkable voice has taken her. His choice of title for the article is most apt.



Destined to Sing

Over the Christmas period some of you may have noticed a 'familiar face from the past' once again singing with the cathedral choir. This face belongs to none other than Stephanie Jennifer Poropat, former choral scholar at St Pat's and now two and a half years into a three year placement at The Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England. Whilst at The RNCM Stephanie is enhancing her voice and performance skills in a programme designed to ensure she maintains that essential competitive edge, not only for the current roles she holds, but also for those of future performances in what has become the super competitive world of modern classical opera performance.



A nostalgic trip down memory lane for Stephanie last Christmas:

Stephanie was in Sydney recently enjoying a few weeks break with her family. We caught up with her to find out something of her musical journey thus far. This is what we discovered:

Stephanie's first public (and impromptu) concert took place at Blacktown Plaza when she was only four, with a singing rendition of the national anthem, *Advance Australia Fair*. This was sung at the top of her lungs and apparently without actually knowing one single word of it! She sang regardless. What impressed those hearing her on this occasion however was not so much that the young person singing obviously possessed a wonderful voice, but more that her singing already exhibited an appreciation of how to sing to dramatic effect. Was this a portent of greater things to come?

Well, let's move quickly forward ten years to find Stephanie now in her fourteenth year attending a Saturday evening Vigil Mass with her family at St John the Baptist, Bonnyrigg. It was following this Mass that she finally asked her parents if they would pay for her to begin singing lessons. She mentions that the well known *Parable of the Talents* as found in Chapter 25 of St. Matthew's Gospel had played heavily on her mind for some years, but perhaps no more intensely than during that particular Saturday evening's Homily. Just to recap for us, it is in this parable where we are told of two servants who are commended by their master for investing wisely the talents he entrusted to them, but

that a third servant who buries the talent entrusted to him, thus not investing in its potential, is cast out into outer darkness by his master as a result. For Stephanie this consequence has always struck her with a particular poignancy, namely — that if one is endowed with 'a talent' and doesn't utilise it creatively to produce positive outcomes in their life, a life-time of regret may be the consequence. She sees in the third servant of this parable both loss of opportunity and neglect in seizing the moment — where fear of failure and fear of stretching one's own boundaries take hold and stifle all chance of a positive outcome.

From Stephanie's point of view, future reflections on this parable would from then on only lead her into making the very most of whatever opportunities were presented, with no room for dalliance or demise. It was also at the conclusion of that Vigil Mass that saw Stephanie approach the St. John the Baptist choirmaster to ask if she could officially join the choir? — Her choral life was now starting, was now up, and was now running.

One question I very much wanted to ask Stephanie was whether she did now, or had in the past, relate comfortably to forms of music other than the classic operatic style. Much to my surprise, she claimed to still be something of a 'rock tragic'! This might be explained by the fact that in her life-defining fourteenth year whilst studying under music teacher, Claire

Abrahamov, she was also encouraged

to explore a full gamut of musical genres which included pop, jazz, musical theatre and rock, amongst others. However, she acknowledges that the pull of the classical operatic music style always stole her heart back, so that by the time she had reached her seventeenth year her journey was already leaning heavily towards a musical career in classical voice and operatic performance.

Another question asked — was there any occasion when you were left with no doubt at all that you needed to make a firm and total commitment to a love and life of song? — to which she offered this singular, definitive reply: It came whilst still a high school student at Freeman Catholic College on an occasion in front of a gathering of some twelve hundred students, teachers and parents. She was asked to sing the famous power-ballad: *Don't Want To Miss A Thing* by Aerosmith (made famous in the film 'Armageddon'). However, Stephanie found that even as soloist, the singing of it was not the impetus, nor the fact that all twelve hundred people joined her in singing it, hands raised and swaying to the beat; For Stephanie, the most electrifying part of the whole experience was the 'thunderous applause at the end' and it was THIS that became the catalyst for all that was to follow; she was 'hooked' and from this moment on knew that all she now wanted to be was a musical performer.

Destined to Sing cont'd from previous page

So, where to from here? Following year 12 finals, Stephanie began her studies as a music undergraduate at The University of New South Wales majoring in Voice. She qualified with a Bachelor of Music followed by a Master of Teaching (Secondary-Music). This saw her achieve formal status as a music educator, but still did not satisfy what she describes as her ongoing 'longing to perform'.

To satisfy this passion for performance and with UNSW studies now behind her, Stephanie was able to accept her first formal operatic role with Rockdale Opera Co. playing the role of Mabel in their production of Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*. This was to be the forerunner of many other operatic roles played throughout the greater Sydney region.

Also at this time she was singing as a Cantor at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney and it was whilst there that she came to the attention of musician Michael Butterfield. Michael later moved to St. Patrick's Cathedral as Organist and Assistant Music Director in the Music Ministry team under Director of Music, Bernard Kirkpatrick. It was after moving to Parramatta that Michael suggested to both Bernard and Stephanie that she audition for a position of choral scholar at St Pat's. This she did successfully, remaining as choral scholar at the Cathedral until August 2016 when she resigned in order to finally relocate to the UK.

The rest as they say (and as we now know) is history.

In approaching the final stages of this article, I asked Stephanie what was driving her desire to explore opportunities abroad? She replied that the answer was simple — *"that for a significant part of my life it had been an ambition to study the classical operatic form in Europe, it being the origin and nurture of all classical music forms of this type"*.

Since relocating to the UK, Stephanie has completed highly successful performances as principal in a number of operatic roles for The RNCM, plus two seasons with The National Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company (UK) in professional capacities as both principal and chorus. She also maintains a busy diary of Oratorio together with other professional choral singing engagements throughout the UK.

What does singing mean to her today? In her own words. *"Singing is the source of immeasurable joy as well as challenges. However I wouldn't be without either as both have helped shape me into who I am now. I consider it an absolute privilege that for now, I am able to make singing the centre of my world and may I add that some of my most fulfilling musical experiences happened during my time at St. Pat's. Thanks to Bernard, Michael, Tim and the entire team. I was able to grow not just as a vocalist but as an overall musician and artist as well. I truly cannot thank them all enough"*. Stephanie Jennifer Poropat.

Stephanie's uplifting solo rendition of the carol 'Away In A Manger' during Solemn Mass at the Cathedral on The Feast of The Epiphany offered those present a brief, but wonderful glimpse into her singing world. Her work at The RNCM is obviously now paying serious and positive dividends for all the effort she has made investing 'her talent' with opportunities.

As she returns to Manchester to continue her studies, we wish her the very best in all her future endeavours.

To follow Stephanie Jennifer Poropat's continuing progress and to hear sample recordings of her work, she welcomes supportive visitors to her website as follows:-

www.stephaniejenniferporopat.com

Down memory lane..

The editor delved into her archives to dig out these photos of some members of the choir performing at the 2016 Mother's Day Concert, organized by Ivy Wallace & colleagues. Stephanie sang solo as well as within other groupings.

The concert was followed by a lovely afternoon tea at which the whole troupe were snapped for the records. Wonderful to revisit!



Formation Matters

Co-ordinators, Marietta & Michael Guillema



have already met with Fr Bob to discuss and map out *Live Christ Share Christ* formation sessions up until early June.

Presenters for each session are indicated in brackets.

So be prepared:

take time to enter the dates into your diary, NOW!

FORMATION SESSION DATES

Friday February 15th

The Gospel of Luke (Fr Bob)

7:30pm - 9pm
in the Cathedral Hall

Lenten Sessions: Lectio Divina

On Fridays, 7pm - 8pm
in the Chapel

Week 1: March 8th: ... (Fr Chris)

Week 2: March 15th .. (Fr Bob)

Week 3: March 22nd: (Fr Bob)

Week 4: March 29th: (Matt Bretania)

Week 5: April 5th: (Matt Bretania)
6:30pm - 7:30pm [with Credo]

Friday April 12th:

**Lectio Divina –
Passion Sunday** (Fr Chris)
7pm - 9pm in the Chapel

Friday May 24th:

Mary, Help of Christians (Fr Bob)
7:30pm - 9pm in the Cathedral Hall]

Saturday June 8th:

Pentecost: Day Retreat (Fr Bob)
10am - 3:30pm in the Cathedral Hall.

AN INVITATION TO A FAMILY FOCUSED CONFERENCE



Pax Christi!

We invite you to join us at the **CFCFFL** (*Couples for Christ & Foundation for Families & Life*) **Echo Conference 2019**. The theme is "*Families on Mission*". This is a special event of unprecedented quality, and inspiration presented by well-respected speakers.

The keynote speaker at the conference will be **Mr Frank Padilla**, - Founder of *Couples for Christ*, Servant General of CFCFFL and *Live Christ Share Christ* Moderator. He is a Papal Knight, Noble Knighthood of the Pontifical Order of St Sylvester, conferred by Pope John Paul II Sovereign Pontiff in 1999, a member of Pontifical Council for the Family, 2003 to 2016, Auditor (lay participant), III Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops at Vatican City from October 5 - 18 2014. He is the author of more than 30 books, — *Fishers of Men*, and *An Urgent Call to Proclaim the Good News* to name but two..

The top draw is the people who attend. This is why: Our conference is an invitation to spiritual adventure, open to all to feel at home with strangers. Imagine it — each unknown face will be an opportunity to expand personally, socially and spiritually. There is nothing in this world like creating community face-to-face.

We look forward to this conference every year because of its profound effect on our spiritual lives. It's very empowering. Come and witness the changes that it will bring to your spiritual journey. This conference is a life changing experience that should not be missed.

See you there, fellow pilgrims!

Encourage your relatives friends and their families to accept the invitation.

Register now because the accommodation is running out fast!

For a registration form and booking of accommodation please contact us: email: mguillema@bigpond.com Marietta's mobile: 0425263921

**Hope to see you there,
fellow pilgrims!**

In Christ

Mike & Agnes Guillema

CONFERENCE DETAILS

When: Friday April 12, —
Sunday April 14, 2019

Where: Merroo Christian Centre,
182 Mill Road, Kurrajong,
NSW 2758



St Patrick's Gift Shop: a new parish venture.

**OPEN Tues. 10am - 2pm, Wed. to Fri. 10am - 4pm, Sunday 9am - 2pm
CLOSED Mondays & Saturdays**

A sign with a shamrock indicates the new gift shop's location in Murphy House.

The grand opening took place on the Friday before Advent and proved a bonus in the lead up to Christmas for people seeking religious-oriented gifts.

What!! You still haven't popped in to check what's in store? It is an inviting place to visit and browse, offering a range of piety items such as crucifixes, statues, rosaries, medals, holy cards; greeting cards for all occasions; gift selections to celebrate the various Sacraments; books — Bibles, adults' and children's books; and items from Better World Arts promoting the work of our rural indigenous communities.

COME, LOOK AND BUY!.....your purchasing power helps the parish financially.

Modern Mothers Matter

MODERN MARY:
surviving the challenging vocation
of motherhood as
modern Christian women.

The trials and tribulations of modern motherhood are infinite. I'm already exhausted and my boys are barely 3 and 7. As a Christian mother, I find myself asking how on earth Mother Mary must have coped? Thrust into motherhood through no choice of her own, given the most stressful mandate a woman could ever consider: give birth to, and raise, the Saviour of the world. Never mind my #First World Problem of a nerve-racking Christmas holiday season with the kids!

I'm still reeling from the obscure continuum that is summer holidays with my children. The days are long. "I'm bored!" and "I'm hungry!". "Nice to meet you both! I'm promptly losing the will to live".

Day 1, I was positive and high-spirited. You want to make an origami fighter jet? Yes, we can! By 6pm I was googling vacation care providers. The defining moment of our holidays was when the 2.5 year-old asked if we were there yet, 2kms into the trip to the Central Coast. My eyes widened and I was awash with a wave of regret. The only thing keeping me from completing a full circle at the roundabout and heading home was the reality that it had been

forever since I had a break from work. This was my chance to escape daily life. But the thing about holidays with kids is that it's the SAME daily life in a different place, without all of your go-tos, toys, the craft cupboard, the change table or the 150 changes of clothes.

Alas, a modern mother must continue the work-life juggle (never the work-life 'balance' it purports to be) even whilst on 'holiday'. Desanding a toddler is as difficult as trying to apply sunscreen to a live octopus ...whilst under water. In between watching out for rips and yelling at the older one to remain between the flags as he body-boards his blackened face straight into a sand-bank, I noticed the little one had run towards a pile of dead blue-bottles and was proceeding to jump up and down on them. Once I'd finished screaming at him, I turned my head slowly in an effort to calm myself (a mindfulness technique I learned from a Byrondweller online). To my right, I saw a woman laying beside us reading a book. READING A BOOK. It will be another two decades before I can read a book at the beach! I packed up our million and one seaside chattels and drove straight home.

The aim of this column is to bring the realities of motherhood into the fore and to start a conversation about how we, as modern mothers, can actually live out our role through our faith. This summer, it struck me how ungrateful I must be if even the blessing of holidays with my children is considered a struggle.

Then the Sunday liturgy at the time reminded me of Mother Mary's somewhat composed version of my own hysteria when she had finally found her missing Son after THREE DAYS in a foreign land, asking: "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." [Luke 2:48]. Read: "I HAVE BEEN WORRIED SICK, HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME!!!!???? NO IPAD FOR 10 WEEKS!!!!"

What struck me was Luke 2:52 when they've returned to Nazareth, where Luke closes simply with: "But his mother treasured all these things in her heart". **THIS is the summation of a mother's existence; the treasuring of every challenge as a gift in her heart.**

I'm now back in the safe confines of the office and the faint guilt of leaving my children in the care of others is wholly drowned by the bliss of being able to drink a coffee without someone tipping it into my lap. But the treasures in my heart remain and I hold them very dear; the good and the bad, as the spoils of motherhood.

If this resonates with you, share your stories with us at modernmarymums@gmail.com

This column is a regular feature in *St Pat's Matters*, inviting all modern mums to share your little gems.

Maybe we can start a conversation about how on earth we can, through faith, survive this challenging vocation of motherhood as modern Christian women?

HISTORY AND HERITAGE from page 9

Friends of St Patrick's Cemetery raised money over the years to repair memorials and re-roof the chapel, work now carried on by Parramatta City Council with a selection criteria for memorial repairs. Ground maintenance of the area is continual and evidence of new major work can be seen today with fencing and lighting. After protracted talks with the RTA (now RMS) about road widening, a small strip of land has been taken from the Church Street

boundary which has not encroached into the burial area. In return the cost of a new fence was shared between City of Parramatta Council and the RMS.

There can be no doubt that St Patrick's Cemetery fulfils the requirements for conservation implicit in the Burra Charter. It helps us understand the past by providing evidence of history, it contributes to the pleasantness of our environment and is a focus of our spiritual and cultural sentiment. The significance of the area is embodied in its fabric, setting and contents, in the associated

documents and its relationship with the community.

For the many Catholics buried in this place, who in the early days suffered for their faith, for those who faced flogging rather than attend services other than their own, for the fiercely independent Irish, convicts and free alike, who yearned for the comfort of their own religion when alive and the peace of their own God's Acre when dead, the preservation and protection of this historic cemetery through Heritage Listing is no more than they deserve.

The chance to heal matters:

Rod Hilliker shares his experience of the Timor Awakening Programme, a journey to heal emotional, moral and spiritual wounds of veterans.

TIMOR AWAKENING 7th PROGRAMME

In September 2018, I was selected to be part of the Timor Awakening programme or "TA7", as it became known, being the 7th programme of its type. This is open to veterans with or without operational service. The programme consists of group sessions conducted daily and managed by Veterans Care for Australian and Timorese veterans. It provides holistic health education, group engagement, peer support, pastoral care and historical commendation geared around immersion into Timor-Leste culture. An integral part of the programme was that our group sessions were conducted daily to learn about each other; its objective — to heal the emotional, moral and spiritual wounds of veterans.

Day 1:

I met the team in Darwin.

Day 2:

Arriving at East Timor's capital city, Dili, I was accompanied by a group of veterans I'd met the previous night. Our military experiences varied. Several of us were ex special forces, others from formations within the ADF having served in recent times. I had the pleasure of meeting Ian Hampel, a 95-year-old veteran who served with 2/4 Commando in Timor in 1942. Ian's gratitude was ongoing and said on several occasions that during operations against the Japanese, members of 2/4 Commando would not have survived had it not been for the help of the Timorese, including the criados - young males who would invariably assist Australian soldiers.

Nobody was prepared for the enthusiastic welcome we received from the Timorese, many of whom were former guerrilla fighters and veterans of the 24-year resistance war following the Indonesian invasion of 1975. It has been estimated that throughout this secret campaign, more than 200,000 East Timorese perished at the hands of their invaders and the brutal treatment they endured during that struggle.

At Dili, we meet our security detachment from army and police who were to be our constant companions and welcome shadows.

But first to greet the group on TA7 was Xanana Gusmão, a former militant, and first President of Timor Leste. After being ushered into the VIP lounge for the official greetings, I soon discovered that Timorese speeches were seldom short. However, Xanana gave an impassioned speech for peace, leaving not a dry eye in the room. I soon learned that this was to be a feature of the overall Timor experience.



Xanana Gusmão welcoming Rod

Day 3:

I attended official engagements; the first at the Presidential Palace of Timor Leste President Francisco Guterres, popularly known as Lú-Olo, who welcomed us individually and of course the obligatory speeches.



Being welcomed at the Presidential Palace

We shared lunch together later in the day at a training centre that educated orphan children. I sat beside a former guerrilla fighter, with the code name *Green Leaves*. We had language barriers which were overcome as old soldiers do: they overcome and adapt. So, we showed each other photos of our respective families and this barrier melted.

After lunch it was speech-time

again and the presentation of wooden crucifixes. Scanning the room, I noted all our hosts appeared to have been given one, I noticed a young lady, meekly standing to one side. Making my way through the crowd, I approached this young woman and presented her with a crucifix. Instantly I was rewarded with a most beautiful smile that lit up the room. It was as though she had won the lottery.

Soon it was time for us to leave. Just prior to boarding our awaiting land rovers, the young woman, whom I now know to be Leila Auxiliadora da Silva, ran to me saying she had something she wanted to give me and presented me with a small tapestry which she had done. For once in my life I was speechless at her generosity reaching out to a stranger.This encounter has left a lasting impression and a glimpse into the beauty of a young girl's heart. I may not be able to recall all the names of the places we visited, and which are still floating in my mind; but I will never forget that girl's gesture.



Later in the afternoon we were joined at the hotel by a group of university students who assisted us in preparing books and pens which were to be distributed as aid whilst on tour.

These remarkable kids had such unique personalities, are optimistic about the future and full of hope. I learned that the female-to-male ratio is 2 to 1 and that 60 percent of the population is less than 30-years old. This is the legacy of their tragic past.

To next page

Timor Awakening cont'd

We visited the World War II site where decades ago members of the Australian 2/2 Commando unit landed, informing the Portuguese garrison that they were there to stay, uncertain as to how they would be received, as strictly speaking Portugal was neutral. Fortunately, the Portuguese administration saw it their way.

In the evening we were hosted by the Australian Ambassador and his wife at their residence on the Dili waterfront and the Australian military community who made us feel very welcome with some of us renewing acquaintances with old mates.

Day 4:

We visited the Santa Cruz cemetery, the site of the Dili massacre in 1991.— 250 East Timorese were killed, mostly high school children during a funeral procession. We were fortunate to have with us Max Stahl, the journalist who was filming for Yorkshire TV during that horrible event. He walked us through the event, step-by-step, even showing us where he buried his film for later retrieval. This film which highlighted the plight of the East Timorese people was instrumental in instigating the initiative to liberate Timor Leste.

We later went to the resistance museum and on to the infamous political prison. My new found-friend *Green Leaves* was our guide with a bright sense of humour. He had been an inmate at this prison and determined to share his experience with us. He spent two years in a shared cell about 2 x 3 metres with 13 other inmates. Their only respite was being taken out for interrogation. He described how he was in a group of 67 political prisoners who were sent to Jakarta; — only 14 returned. I stood for a few moments in that cell with him and I could see he was momentarily taken back to that time, and just as quickly offered me a hearty handshake as I squeezed his shoulder in acknowledgment.

What I found astonishing was his capacity to forgive, impressing on us through our Australian Timorese interpreter, Jamie, that it was the only way to move forward.

Day 5:

Departing Dili, we made our way into the mountains being introduced to the delights of the Timorese roads which have the capacity to traumatise even the most stout-hearted, suggesting the urgency to visit a sympathetic chiropractor at the earliest opportunity.

Our first stop was a remote two-room primary school complete with eager, cheeky kids. Here we handed out the first of the school books and pencils. We continued through areas in which Australian commandos had operated during World War II and gained a better appreciation for the terrain and its challenges which had the effect of tying down 20,000 imperial Japanese troops, a manoeuvre which eventually impacted on the war's outcome. We stopped at two ambush sites including the Dare site where a successful ambush was executed.

We continued on the road from Dili to Remexio, an administrative post in the Aileu District of East Timor. During World War II, this was another ambush site, which took out the Japanese commander known as the *Singapore Tiger* who was said to have been riding on a white horse at the time and on his first venture out of Dili. This was of interest to Mick Batchelor, as his father had been in that action. The significance of our visit did not escape him — visibly this man of the land was emotionally moved. Later we visited a former stronghold where the coup of 2006 to 2008 was launched. It was led by Major Alfredo Reinado, the commander of the military police. This fort is situated on a plateau and dominates the village going back to the time when East Timor was a Portuguese colony. We had an opportunity to observe daily life in that rural area, with its open markets and village life. I saw Timorese pony trains being prepared for delivery of supplies deeper into more remote areas where the chewing of betel nut seemed mandatory.

Day 6:

We drove to Betano, the site of the remains of the voyager wreck where 2/4 Commando was landed. It ran aground and had to be scuttled. The population of the district seemed to have turned out

to pay their respects including a host of dignitaries. After the ceremony we had a chance to view the remains of the Voyager. Through the years the sea and the locals have laid claim, leaving only its engine.



Rod flanked by two Green Beret comrades

We visited Raiak Lemau Veterans University where more aid was delivered, and no effort spared to welcome us. It was not the type of university as we know it in Australia. But it was somewhere between a high school and a TAFE college providing students with hope for the future through basic educational opportunities. A local head man gifted another five acres of land to the veterans' care organisation for the purpose of extending the campus.

Day 7:

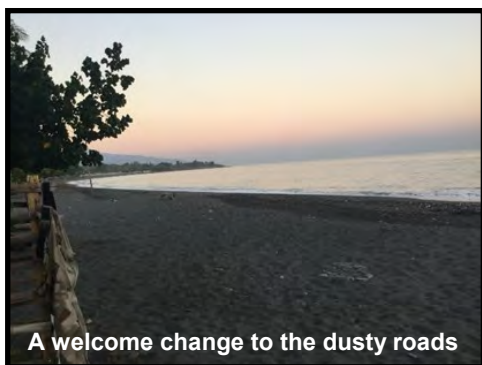
After passing a comfortable night at our Hotel (Uma Liurial), and following our morning session, we made our way through the Timorese countryside passing even more remote rural villages, being greeted along the way by all we passed and onto the location known as JAVA2, which in the time of the occupation evoked only fear for the Timorese as being sent to Java meant you would not be seen again. Its true meaning only being realised when I stood overlooking its sheer cliff and pondered the unlikely chance of surviving a fall. We were told this was one of the preferred methods of disposing of dissidents. It is not known how many victims met their fate off this cliff. Today it's an eerie and peaceful place, the view is nothing more than spectacular. But I never saw any birdlife. I don't recall exactly if it was on this day or not, but we had been given a small **black rock** to carry. It was symbolic of what was troubling us in our lives with the intention of leaving it in this country some time before we left.

To next page

Timor Awakening cont'd

Ian requested we make a detour to Ainaro, the village where two priests were murdered and mutilated by the Japanese whilst celebrating Mass. We were mesmerised as Ian recounted his experience as his patrol passed through the village after the event. He described in detail his memories in front of that same altar - pointing to the door he had come through describing the vivid horror, as if it was only yesterday. In the same village and perhaps 200 meters away stored in a large hall are remains of 2,500 Timorese victims. Each box draped in their nation's flag and where possible, their details displayed as a short narrative and the occasional photograph. We learnt that in each district there are similar sites and that regularly remains are uncovered and stored to give them some dignity.

We returned to Dili via a direct and more modern road absent in the main of potholes, but conscious of the road slides sometimes having to avoid boulders the size of small motor vehicles. It took around 30 minutes to reach Laugata beach site. Major Mike Stone described military actions experience in more recent times. On arrival our group was divided into two, going to separate accommodations for the night. The black volcanic sand and sunset being a welcome change to the dusty roads. Winding down in this environment was no problem.



Days 8 and 9:

After breakfasting our group went to rendezvous with the other group at Likisa, located a little further along the coast for our morning session. From there we made our way along the coast road. I couldn't help thinking when the roads are complete, what a delight it will be to revisit, as the sea in contrast to the landscape must be seen to be appreciated. Stopping at a remote

fishing village the people were eager to meet the Aussie vets.

Cutting inland we made our way to Balibo and the traditional Timorese welcome at Fort Balibo. There was time to visit the small museum known as Australia House dedicated to the memories of Australian journalists murdered during the early part of the 1975 invasion. It was the right place to leave Australian-style comments in the Visitors' Book. I was directed to the site known as the Chinese House stopping briefly at a local store where witnesses stated five Australian journalists were to be executed. I walked through the now derelict building taking a few pictures for my records and said a prayer for their souls. My mood was transformed once I left this building which had been the memory of such horror and reminded of the Timorese gift of optimism which has a remarkably cleansing effect



Some local children had been waiting outside to greet me in local dialect and broken English. Eager to meet an Aussie, they were not remotely interested as to why I was in this old house. I suspected however, they were motivated by curiosity as to the contents of my shopping bag which I gladly shared with them.

After dinner former fighters shared their experiences with us. Speaking to one of the Timorese veterans I asked her how did she manage to survive 24 years in the mountains? She said they had faith that the Australians would someday return to help them: 'all we had to do was hold out'. Placing her hand gently above my heart, she said that "the Australian Government turned away from us, but we always knew the Australian people supported them". I was grateful to be wearing dark sunglasses as I stared at her in

admiration.

During our stay, some of us took the opportunity to attend Mass at Balibo. Chaplain Gary Stone, a man of great character assisting. Afterwards we left some aid at the local school returning briefly to the fort, and then onto Maliana Markets in the township stopping on the way at Nanura River to gain a better appreciation of border operations of 1999 to 2004 and the Calico Valley of 1942. Taking a detour on the way to visit the border with West Timor for a photo opportunity.

Officials from both sides were polite but business-like with Indonesian Area Commander, coming over to say hello. We had lunch later in a local restaurant in Maliana. The concept of fast food is non-existent in this part of the world, but despite this our hosts were delightful. So we contented ourselves with our own company till we were fed.

Walking around the dusty market didn't take all that long, on sale mostly local products and second-hand clothing. Seemed it was also a good season for betel nut.

Returning to Balibo in the afternoon, our group session's topic around the fire being forgiveness, forgiving others and oneself, sharing some deep and personal stories. My personal conclusion being that the price of retribution is too much for humanity to pay and a sense of wonder at my fellow human beings.

Days 9 and 10:

On the morning of 17 September, we meet at the Australian Memorial outside the gates of Balibo Fort. A memorial service being joined by the Timorese veterans, an emotional time, as we each were asked to remember someone close we had lost. And being a part of something bigger than yourself perhaps making the world a better place, for a while at least. Some of us gave a little of ourselves and some gave everything. There were short readings and a reflective sermon given by Padre Gary Stone. Both national anthems were sung and the chance to leave our **black rock** behind.



At Fort Balibo



Six Green Berets: Rod 3rd from left



Rod with José Manuel Ramos-Horta

resistance, and later became President of East Timor, and who in 1996 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Michael Stone walked us through the site where in 2008 Ramos-Horta was shot during an assassination attempt; two out of the three assassins being neutralised. He warmly welcomed us in the Timorese way, entertaining us with some light-hearted stories making sure his esky was full and that we were well fed.

On our final day as we split up into separate groups, some electing to walk up to the Jesus statue that overlooks the city — a walk not for the faint hearted, as I was soon to discover. We spent the remainder of the day in preparation for our departure. That evening we had our final circle time and the opportunity to farewell our new-found-friends at the Hotel Dili Plaza. It occurred to me

that on this journey we had mixed with all levels of society, the one commonality being their dignity and desire to rebuild their country.

Early the next morning we made our way home, each enriched by the experience and deep in our own thoughts.

My gratitude goes to the support staff of this programme who inspired, motivated and at times challenged me. The programme gave participants the chance to spend time with like-minded individuals with similar life experiences, and in some cases the need to expel their **demons**.

Finally, I wish to state that I have witnessed true Christian Faith that has taken root in this country and noted it is the type of Faith I would like to adopt.

ROD HILLIKER
NORTHMEAD, NSW
Ex 1 commando regiment

We left Balibó and made our way via the dusty coastal road. I was conscious of the rumble of the vehicles' tyres hitting the road and equally conscious of the silence as we remained quietly reflecting on what we had learnt stopping at a local craft market on the black sandy beach and opposite the Dutch Fort. Some took the opportunity to visit the local orphanage run by nuns to deliver more aid. And finally stopping at Dili Plaza; being left to our own devices for the remainder of the day to decompress. one of the boys started crying as he called home sobbing that he just wanted to speak to someone he loved. **We all did.**

That evening we were invited to the private home of José Manuel Ramos-Horta who had overseen the political wing during the



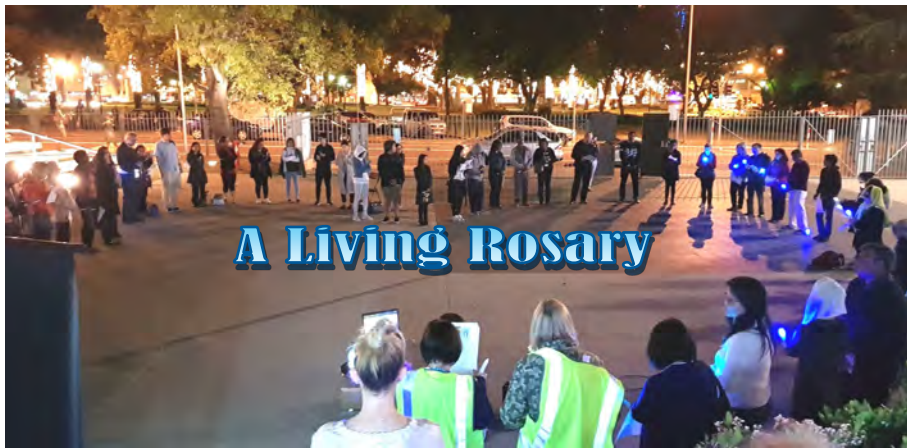
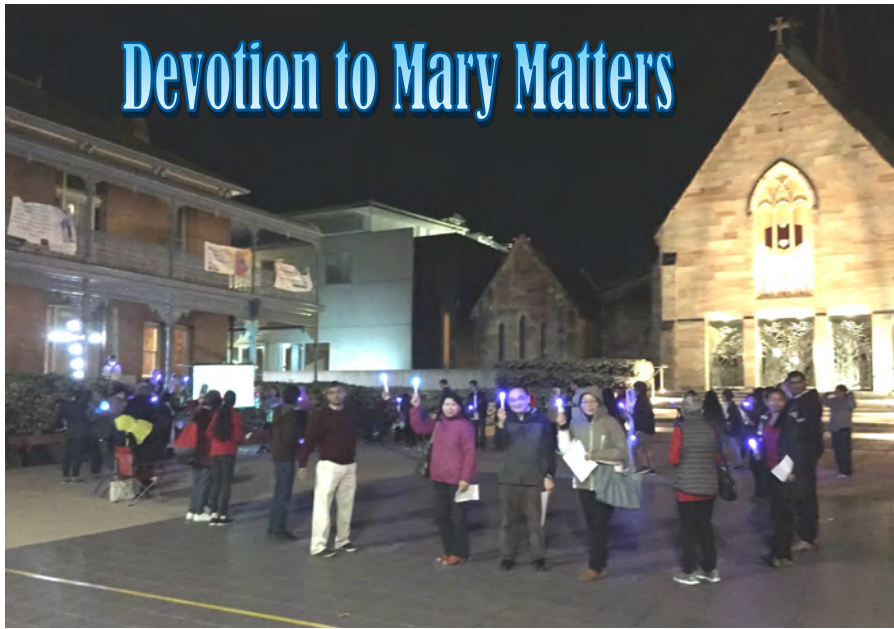
The route of the Journey

Editor's Note:

"Things happen for a reason." This was the rather cryptic comment Rod Hilliker made to my email sent in reply to the one I had received from him. His had an attachment with the 'Timor Awakening' story. I noted it had been emailed to several other people, so I queried if he had intended to send it to me as a submission for St Pat's Matters, or had I been included by accident. And even if it was an accident, would he mind if the story was published to share with the parish community?

That is the scenario that led to Rod's rather mysterious reply. So I made an executive decision and featured his amazing experience to shed a little light on the many struggles people who have been to war have to cope with on returning home. Thanks Rod.

Devotion to Mary Matters



Bernadette Ching, Event Co-ordinator comments:

What inspired this event? It was the Polish people standing around their coastline praying the Rosary together and a picture of the lights on the hills of Medjugorje that prompted the **Living Rosary** at St Pat's last year. We also wanted to welcome October, the month of the Rosary and expose Jesus to the public, especially the many children who do not know about Jesus.

It almost did not eventuate as we only garnered 23 of the 59 volunteers' signatures needed in the 3 months the posters were up. It was thanks to Ely and a new parishioner, Chlea, who called out of the blue, that we were able to get an additional 29 signatures one Sunday, just the week before 30th September, the date set for the Rosary gathering.

On behalf of Fr Bob, Mary Brennan and Ely Gallardo, I thank everyone who took part, especially, Felicia distributing candles/printouts, Louise & daughter impromptu leading of singing, Maria, Maryanne, Mimi & Marian setting up the hall for supper and cleaning up, Jaime taking photos, Nelson helping set up the projector, screen, cables and chasing after the flying screens for hours during the day! Everyone that day just did what needed to be done. It was an awesome, happy, spiritual mood

We are grateful to John's Pizza, at Broughton Street Parramatta, who gave us free drinks and a discount too, when he heard it was for the Church.

PHIL RUSSO, OAM, and parishioner of 57 years, shares the following reflection

This national day of celebration made me think about what **Australia Day** means to me.

In only two hundred and thirty one years Australia has progressed from a British convict settlement into a very prosperous and stable country, a country in which all people are able to live in relative peace.

Then I thought about the aboriginal people. The local Parramatta group was the Burramattagal Clan of the Darug People. These people have lived in and around the Parramatta River for over 50 thousand years.

They lived and traded with other aboriginal people from the coast to the Blue Mountains. The river was their life blood and they lived in harmony with nature, neither taking from the land nor water more than was needed for survival.

They had their own laws and culture and their strongest connection with the land or "Mother Earth" as they knew it.

The arrival of the first Fleet in 1788 with a cargo of humans, both convicts and their guards, was the start of momentous upheaval and change for the indigenous people of the Great South Land, first in Sydney Harbour, and following six weeks later, with the Governor and party exploring the upper reaches of the river arriving at what is now the fast developing city of Parramatta.

What has happened to these people of the First Nation in the course of those 231 years is tragic: theirs is a history of decimation by disease, alcohol addiction, destruction of their social structures, and being pushed to the fringes of white society.

Up until 1967, only 52 years ago, aboriginal people were not included in the census, not entitled to vote, not allowed into hotels — to name just a few of the injustices they faced.

My reflection is meant to serve as a reminder to our parish community that around 50 millenia ago the Burramattagal People walked on the land where St Patrick's Cathedral stands today.

Thanks to the people who came from as far as Condell Park, Epping, Westmead, Seven Hills, Freeman's Ridge and Wilberforce.. It was heart-warming to have families with children, even babies come to take part. We hope you had a beautiful encounter with Jesus and Mary in our prayer and reflection.

You know, the Angels and Saints whom we called upon to help in our offering did intercede: Mary Brennan, who was doing the roll reported "the people who came up to ask if they could still join in, were the exact number needed to replace those who did not show up". (Miracle).

For me, the night's highlight was when someone suggested we raise our lights skyward. As I looked up to heaven, I smiled remembering St Therese of Lisieux writing in her diary that a simple glance at heaven with a smile is a simple prayer offered to God. (or words to that effect).

**God bless you all.
TO GOD GOES ALL THE GLORY.**

DR FRED LUKE: *It is the first time I've heard of and experienced the Human Rosary. It is fantastic. The experience was so good that I have been thinking of it over and over again and I have decided to promote it within my community. Thanks for organizing this.*

STEPHANIE ATTWELL: *It was a pretty memorable event. Thanks again for getting us involved. You have done a great job organizing this event despite all the set backs.*

WE WERE LIVING BEADS OF THE ROSARY

DIANE SMITH

When my friend Bernadette told me she wanted to arrange and offer up a Human Rosary as a love offering in atonement for the constant sins of the world against God, I was moved and wanted to be a part of this offering.

Bernie knew I was not one to pray the Rosary as I prefer praying directly to Our Lord Jesus Christ directly. And so she was as surprised as I was when I offered to join in her endeavour. And I am so very glad that I did.

On the night it unfolded quite simply and beautifully and without pious fanfare. A very humbling experience as we lit our candles (representing each bead of the Rosary) and lifted our gift and hearts to heaven. It momentarily reminded me of when I was a child and my siblings and I put on plays in our living room for our tortured parents who really loved our performance and acknowledged our efforts wholeheartedly. So yes, on the night well into the Rosary I felt our heavenly Family and the angels smiling over us and warmly accepting this love offering, too.

I would definitely participate in this type of prayer offering again and I thank Bernadette for having the heart to invite others to share in this offering and also for all the organising this event involved — not to mention the wonderful supper and treats she provided afterwards.

As a bonus I also got to meet some amazingly interesting parishioners that I would never have met otherwise. It was a truly lovely experience and evening.

MARIA NGUYEN: *Well organized, great to see children, families, people with diversity, praying together. Everyone was able to follow the flow and adapt to the situation e.g. the microphone cord was not long enough to reach to every human bead. This did not interrupt the prayers which were the main key for that night.*

LOUISE LOCKE. *Hi Bernie, Thank you so much for all your effort for the human rosary on Sunday night. My children and I really enjoyed it and it was great to see everyone come together. Thank you also for the wonderful food afterwards. God bless you for your great works.*



*HAIL MARY!
full of grace
The Lord is with Thee.
Blessed art though
amongst women
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb,
JESUS.*

I'm **CARMEN** and I'm 73 years old. It was an honour to be part of the human Rosary. Actually, I had participated in it when I was just 5 years old in a fiesta celebration for Our Lady Of Fatima on the island of Cebu where the arrival of the first cross was planted by Magellan. Yes, perhaps it's a good idea to involve young kids next time. You may call me any time. Time to give back to the community. God is so good and full of wonders.



Plenary Council 2020 matters...

Pope Francis has approved the Australian Bishops' decision to hold a Plenary Council in Australia in 2020 and 2021.



To prepare the Plenary Council's agenda ALL of God's people are invited to reflect on the question: **"What do you think God is asking of us in Australia today?"**

It is a significant opportunity for the Church in Australia to make decisions about the future.

On March 1, St Pat's will be holding our first parish-based **'Listening & Dialogue Session'**.

This is an opportunity for us to reflect on the question above as it relates to us. Make your voice heard.

Join other parishioners in brainstorming what we want the future of our church to be.

What Plenary 2020 is all about?

Plenary 2020 is the name given to a process initiated by the Australian Bishops. They are inviting people to engage in listening, dialogue and discernment. All input will be processed and culminate in the Plenary Council meetings in 2020 and 2021.

What is a Plenary Council all about?

- ◆ A Plenary Council is the highest form of gathering that a church in a particular country can have.
- ◆ It is an opportunity for the voices of all the People of God in Australia, laity and ordained alike, to be heard.
- ◆ The last major assembly for the Catholic Church of Australia took place more than eighty years ago in 1937!

What is a Plenary Council all about?

- ◆ A Plenary Council has legislative power.
- ◆ Its final decisions become law and have binding power.
- ◆ The responsibility of making these decisions falls on the Conference of Bishops, who do so only after discerning the will of the Holy Spirit with the people.

You can find out more about the Plenary Council 2020 at the new website now online: www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au

Vinnies Volunteers and Donors bringing CHRISTMAS JOY

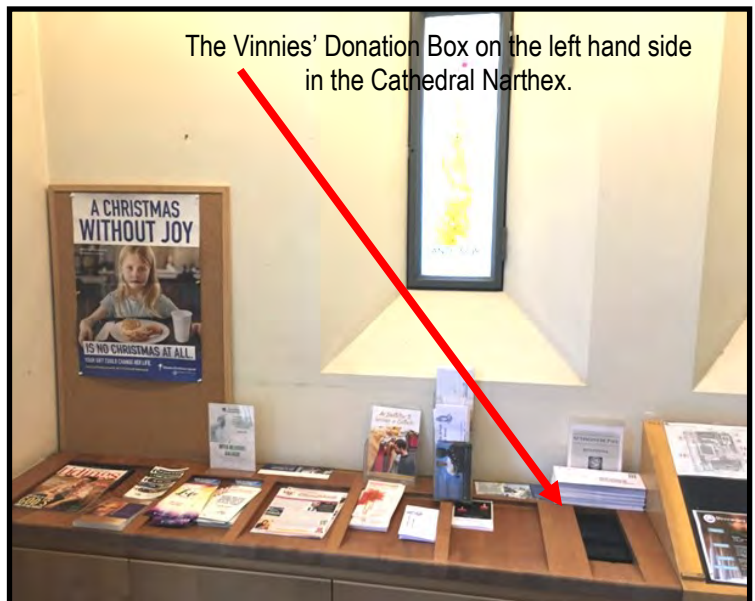
from page 4



Ray Love and Terry O'Brien are just two of the people who helped sorting food and grocery items for the Vinnies hampers.



This huge pile of groceries is evidence of the generosity of St Patrick's Primary School community. THANK YOU SO MUCH!



The Vinnies' Donation Box on the left hand side in the Cathedral Narthex.

A FINAL WORD from THE EDITOR

I had intended to feature a write-up on two couples commending them for their good works: one for involvement in service to the parish community; the other for services both in and beyond St Pat's.

Unfortunately, I ran out of space!!

So they will feature in the next *St Pat's Matters*. Until then you can play a guessing game as to who might the two couples be.