

# St Pat's Matters

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



*The JOY of  
First Eucharist*

July 2021 | Issue 107



## Editorial

Well! Finally issue 107 is here, albeit much, much later than originally anticipated. First hurdle delaying its printing was the upheaval of renovations in the presbytery and parish office. Then, just as it looked as if it was “full steam ahead”, COVID-19 lockdown restrictions shut the Cathedral and office.

Despite delayed distribution, it's hoped that readers will still enjoy what's on offer.

To begin there's coverage of an important milestone for children, making their First Holy Communion — with Meg Gale and Bernadette Fabri highlighting the importance of the faith being nurtured first within the family and then at parish level.

Then follows a 92-year old's candid account of her long journey to the Catholic Faith. Inspiring!

Two other people of advanced years show their mettle: Felicita Apparthurai, at 97 and Terry O'Brien at 89. Find out how by reading their articles.

Marthe Nalletamby writes about her experience of the devotions and pilgrimage on Divine Mercy Sunday. And Claire Pospischil gathered comments from mums and sons who attended Marist High's Mass for Mothers and Sons.

In Formation Matters, Stan Lobo comments about Deacon Rod Pirotta's talk on *Love and Joy*, while John and Donna Missio and Raquel La Rosa write about the Pentecost Retreat presented by Fr Christ del Rosario and Annette Hartman.

On the Ministry front: learn about the SREs Commissioning Mass and Recruitment Drive and enjoy reading what led to Jose Argueta joining up; while Gen Lee, Youth Co-ordinator up-dates us on Credo's Groups.

Enjoy the collation of parishioners' nutshell stories from the weekly bulletin's **“Getting to know you”** section. More next issue!

Loyal contributors, Judith Dunn and Modern Mary as usual have penned articles to delight and inform.

A fitting finale is a tribute to 200 years of Catholic Education in Australia and here in Parramatta, courtesy of Ms Fabri and Mili Lee.

**M. Polizzi**

# SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION MATTER FIRST HOLY COMMUNION



## **MEG GALE, SACRAMENTAL CO-ORDINATOR reports on FIRST EUCHARIST at ST PATRICK'S**



On the feast of Corpus Christi, Sunday 6 June, 52 children gathered with their families and friends at our very own St Patrick's Cathedral here in Parramatta. Their bright faces were filled with excitement and anticipation; after many months and sessions of preparation — which commenced in October last year and which, not only prepared the children for First Eucharist, but also for First Reconciliation — these children were about to

receive the very best gift of all; for the first time in their lives they were about to receive Jesus in the Eucharist! We were blessed with a beautiful sunny morning, as if nature itself was reflecting the joy and excitement of our children and their families coming together for this milestone occasion. The cathedral was at capacity and being able to come together as a parish community in this way was a wonderful blessing and a stark contrast to First Eucharist celebration last year which, due to the COVID restrictions at the time, had been severely limited to just three family members per child. (and over two Masses!)

For the first time since I have been in this role, we had three priests concelebrating our beautiful First Eucharist Mass; the Dean, Fr Robert Riedling was the main celebrant, joined by our assistant priests Fr Chadi Ibrahim and Fr Chris del Rosario. In his homily, Fr Robert read the children a message from their friend Jesus reminding them that **Jesus' love is “greater than they can possibly imagine” and that Jesus wants them to come and receive him in the Eucharist “on many more occasions in the future”**. The talented St Patrick's Primary choir, led by Mrs Venitia Rodricks, made our First Eucharist just that much more special as they guided the congregation in singing school hymns chosen especially for the day. After the Mass and the traditional group photo, taken on the stairs outside the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, the children with their families and friends gathered in the cloister where we marked the occasion with a big celebratory sponge cake. Then, in the cathedral hall, Fr Robert presented each child with their First Communion certificate.

Here, at the cathedral parish, we are truly blessed to have a beautiful support network for our Sacramental Program and a fantastic relationship with St Patrick's Primary School. Special thanks go to the school's REC, the wonderful Mrs Chantal Tuetue, who gave indispensable support throughout our preparation program and assistance at our First Eucharist celebration. Thanks also to St Patrick's Primary School Principal, Bernadette Fabri and to other teachers and staff who were present supporting the children, the parish's sacramental programme and community. Finally, a huge thank you to the team — Kerry Giumelli, Mindy Mercado, Gen Lee and our priests; for their invaluable support and guidance during preparation sessions and at the First Eucharist celebration.

Please continue to keep our children, who have just made their First Eucharist, in your prayers, — that they continue to grow in their faith and that, in a few years, they will continue their journey to completion of the Sacraments of Initiation with the Sacrament of Confirmation.



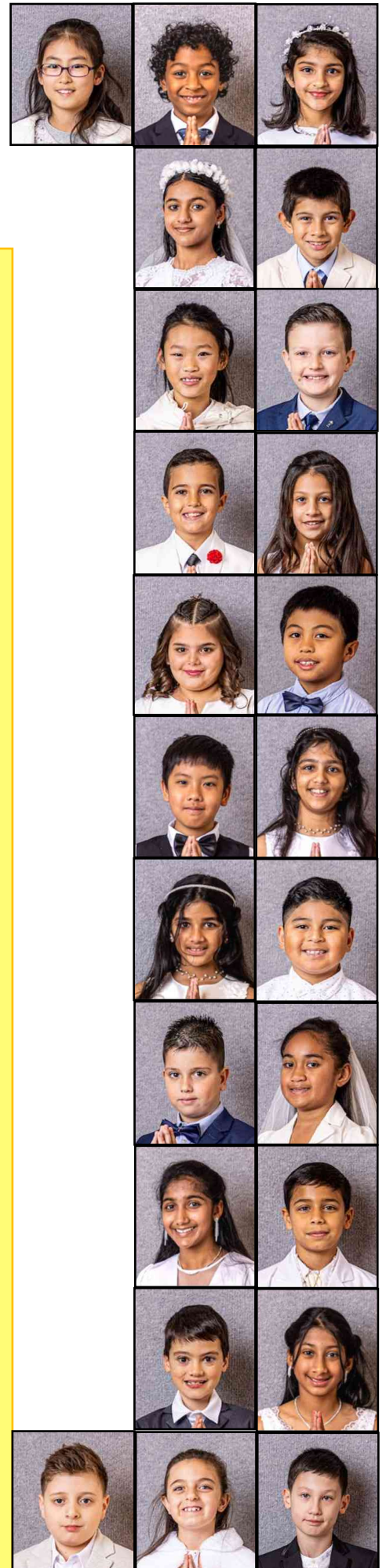


# We received our First Eucharist on the Feast of Corpus Christi

Children,



Isaiah Abu-Ali  
 Caryn Maria Ajith  
 Irene Liz Ajith  
 Kayla Amaral  
 Chanel Anne Barber  
 Matzo Barroso  
 Jordan Jade Elizabeth Bindley  
 Jayden Blazek  
 Sofia Bousimon  
 Vincent Matthew Camenzuli  
 Juris Alexander Cases  
 Joshua Day  
 Marcus Francis Dikha  
 Callum Clement Donaldson  
 Audrey Elizabeth El Bayeh  
 Quintus Feng  
 Khobz Gallardo  
 Mia Rose Golossian  
 Erick Granados-Gavito  
 Eva Harrisz  
 Leisel Harrisz  
 Izanna Izrardo  
 Traminta Jackson  
 Scarlett Jaitani  
 Mariah Jrziz  
 Daniel Jurisie  
 Emma Claire Lim  
 Papani Loto'aniu  
 Frank Gerard Malkoun  
 Melinda Nora Malkoun  
 Zachariah Daniel David McPherson  
 Logan Connor Edward Munro  
 Kenzie Murphy  
 Matzo Julian Nario  
 Anastasia Jane Naudi  
 Nathan Phi Thanh Nguyen  
 Isabelle Theresa Nidhin  
 Michelle Brigitte Nidhin  
 Lavinia Silongo He Hau Nimmo  
 Crystal Josephine Perreira  
 Aidan Luca Portela  
 Sianna Grace Portela  
 Patrick Simon Saab  
 Olivier Luc Touche  
 Evelyn Maria Wilson  
 Elaine Xue  
 Ethan Xue  
 Olivia Zhang





# How to receive Jesus



with  
Awe,  
Reverence,  
and  
Joy

## A unique occurrence

In this issue of St Pat's Matters we have had the rare privilege of featuring the reception of the Sacrament of First Eucharistic across the span of generations:

First up was the coverage of children making their First Holy Communion, which is the second of the three Sacraments on their journey to full initiation into the Catholic Faith.

That's the young generation, and at the age this occasion normally takes place.

And then there is Margaret Mulholland Cooper!

Cast your gaze across to the next page and there is Margaret, who, at 92, is several generations past the young recipients, yet was still prepared to **'joyfully embrace the teaching and faith of the Catholic Church'** and receive her first Eucharist as a Catholic.

At such an advanced age, how could it possibly happen?

We'll let Margaret unravel the story of her long journey.

## A reflection worth sharing

**Principal, Bernadette Fabri, wrote the following in St Patrick's Primary School Newsletter, Week 8.**

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Last Sunday, children from our school received the Sacrament of Eucharist for the first time — their First Holy Communion, — at St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta. This is the first group of children from our school to receive this very important sacrament this year. It is always wonderful to see all the children and their families, including their extended family, making this a priority on Sunday. For many children this will be a day they will never forget.

One of the many blessings about working in a Catholic School is the honour of seeing thousands of children receive their First Holy Communion. You can imagine, after nearly 41 years in education, the many ceremonies I have attended, each one special.

I know for many Catholic adults this time assists us to remember our own First Holy Communion. I certainly do. Like these children I was just 7 or 8 years old at St Anthony's, Girraween and, unlike today, our lessons were solely held within the school day with very little parent involvement regarding extra catechesis. Looking back I feel I was so lucky that our mother regularly embedded our faith into our daily lives. Attending Mass every weekend, it was just natural that one day it was to be our turn to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. We witnessed our parents and older siblings receive communion every week, regularly receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and enjoy the gathering of family and friends outside the church every Sunday.

In those days family tended to live in the same suburb. **It is my**

**belief that faith that is only experienced at the school level cannot possibly have the same impact as that which is lived and spoken about daily at home.** The Catholic school plays a very important part in faith development. **However, for faith to be sustainable, resilient and enduring, it is best nurtured in the home first.**

I have often repeated an idea shared by a parish priest years ago when he surmised: if faith is only experienced at school, then there is the likely danger that the student takes off their faith when they take off their uniform. It is this key principle which recommends that children's learning about the sacraments is best achieved through a Parish-based, Family-centred approach. I know that all parents want their children to grow up to be kind, forgiving, generous, compassionate adults, who will behave as good citizens in the service of the community. They want their children to be happy and have a love of God and one day, God willing, to have their own beautiful families. Who knows they may even send them to St Patrick's, Parramatta.

Children are learning to become these adults, now, from you, their parents and family. If we wish them to attend church regularly and receive the Eucharist every Sunday we need to be demonstrating that now, by taking them to Mass and by showing them what it looks like to be an adult Catholic who is active in their faith. Can I ask you all to keep in your prayers the children who have made and are yet to make their First Holy Communion, this year, and to pray that their families will continue to gift them with a faith that is resilient, inspired by the Catholic tradition and open to the world of today. May God continue to bless you in your role as parents and caregivers and continue to grant you wisdom and grace.

## HOW COULD IT POSSIBLY HAPPEN?

by Margaret Mulholland Cooper

How could it possibly happen that a shy English girl brought up and nurtured in an ultra-strict non-conformist home with strong anti-Catholic teaching should, towards the end of her long life, at the other side of the world, joyfully embrace the teaching and faith of the Catholic Church?

Unlikely, yes. Impossible, no! For with God all things are possible, and He works in His own time and way.

My father, one of a large family was brought up in the Congregational (non-conformist) Church in Essex on the outskirts of London. At some stage, as adults he and several of his siblings left the Congregational Church and joined the Plymouth Brethren —so called because the movement mainly began in Plymouth England early in the 19th century. My mother, from a non-Christian background in the north of England was a convert as a child through attending a Brethren Sunday School.

While still holding the tenets of the mainline Protestant churches, the Brethren had no hierarchy or ordained ministry; each 'assembly' was autonomous. At the Sunday morning 'breaking of the bread', any baptized male who 'felt led by the Spirit' was free to announce a hymn, pray, read a portion of Scripture (usually the same) or officiate at the Communion Table. There were also strict codes of outward conformity to be adhered to.

The Brethren movement quickly spread across the UK and then overseas. Many of those early followers were clergy still officiating in the Church of England. One of them, John Darby in 1845, accused another brother of erroneous teaching about the humanity of Christ, and, although the error was later corrected, he and a band of followers broke away to form another autonomous gathering —The Exclusive Brethren!

My parents however were 'Open Brethren', and when I was eleven, I was sent to an Open Brethren boarding school at Yeovil in SW England. Although I was frequently in trouble, I enjoyed my years there and made many friends with girls of similar Brethren backgrounds. Having made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ when I was about nine, I was baptized by immersion at the age of sixteen and was now safely in the Brethren Fold.

But was I?

In my early twenties, through a series of unhappy events, I left the Brethren, and also began to leave God out of my life. People who left the Brethren usually gravitated to the Baptist Church, which, having similar beliefs, was sort of acceptable. But the Church of England — oh dear, no!

But that is precisely where I turned! I knew nothing of its teaching, but on occasional visits to churches with Anglican friends I was strongly drawn to the Eucharistic Service; its liturgy, beauty and reverence were in stark contrast to what I had hitherto known.

So, while I was nursing in London, I received instruction from the hospital chaplain, and in December 1959 I was confirmed at St Paul's Cathedral by the Bishop of London.

A first, very small step towards Rome!

Shortly after this I visited Australia to meet my relatives and made my base with cousins in Killara, who had also left the Brethren and become Anglicans. But I found the Sydney Diocese

very 'low church' (as it is referred to in Anglicanism) and missed the rich liturgy to which I had become accustomed. My second visit to Australia in 1962 proved to be of much longer duration as I married an Australian, had a son and we settled in St Ives.

Sadly, my marriage was not successful; we separated and were finally divorced in 1975. when my son was ten. But in those turbulent years of my marriage, I returned to the God I had neglected for so long. I experienced a new peace in my life and began to evangelise with all the zeal of a new convert, also becoming involved in church activities and writing articles for Christian magazines. This new and happier life included teaching Confirmation classes at Christ Church, St Ives, attending different Bible Study groups and, later when I was alone in the house, opening it to other Protestant Church groups. I had now become lulled into accepting non-conformist type Anglican Church services, and so life might have continued if I had not married Frank Cooper.

Frank, an adventurous Englishman from a non-Christian home, had emigrated and, upon his (now disintegrating marriage) had joined the Mormon Church, but was clearly seeking something different. We talked, and it was not long before the Holy Spirit opened his eyes to the true Gospel. He was now determined to accept only what he read in the Bible and was keen to know what other churches were teaching.

Soon after we met, we had fallen deeply in love. So, although Frank now lived in a unit at North Ryde, he would come over on Sunday morning and together we would go church shopping in the vicinity of St Ives. We attended Hornsby Baptist Church for a while. Frank was baptized there by immersion, and later, when we were both free, after much prayer we were married by the Baptist Minister, in front of about forty guests on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1977, in my home at St Ives, where we then lived for the first few years of marriage.



Cont'd next page

But Frank was still searching for deeper spiritual truths and it was the time of the Charismatic Renewal. We came across some TV programmes early on Sunday mornings featuring the Full Gospel Business-Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI). It was obviously Pentecostal, so although Frank decided to investigate, I was very dubious, having been taught (along with the fact that the Pope was the Anti-Christ), that spiritual gifts had passed away with the first Apostles, any manifestations now were of the devil, and these gifts had only been to "get the Church off the ground"! Sounds like a dishonest sales pitch, but of course I had bought it as a child.

Frank dialled the number on the screen, got further information, and soon became a member. FGBMFI members, (who seemed to be mainly Charismatic Catholics, Anglicans and Pentecostals), held evangelistic meetings in non-threatening venues such as hotels and restaurants where Christian businessmen could take non-Christian colleagues and associates. We found this an excellent tool for evangelism.

We attended a FGBMFI Conference in Sydney one weekend where one of the speakers was Dr Fred Ladenius, who had served in the Vatican Press Office in a variety of roles under the Charismatic Pope John XXIII. In 1970 he had also initiated the Charismatic Movement in Italy. I was fascinated by what he told us of the Pope and other charismatic events and purchased his book, *Amazing John XXIII*. It became one of my favourite books. Another step towards Rome!

Fellowshipping with so many Catholic Christians at FGBMFI events showed us that they were not the pagan worshippers of Mary, as the majority of Protestants believe, but we were now investigating the truths of Pentecost, not Rome! The Baptist Church we learned, did not believe that healing is for today. So, it was Bye, Bye Baptist Church! We started attending Pentecostal Churches and were soon selling Pentecostal books and tapes and showing Pentecostal teaching videos to Charismatic Anglicans in our home and had book tables at FGBMFI dinners at city hotels. We began holding Prayer Breakfasts in our home and were now mixing with Catholics as well as Protestants in Charismatic groups.

But it was not until we moved into a large house designed and built by Frank, on the Central Coast, that we first attended a Catholic Service. Our next-door neighbours were Nancy and Harry Walsh, Charismatic Catholics, and parents of Fr Kevin Walsh! We became friendly and attended one or two Catholic Services with them and were favourably impressed. The Walshs moved back to Sydney, but we kept in touch and when, after living in Hobart and Brisbane, we too returned to Sydney in 1996, we purchased a house quite near them in Quakers Hill.

We were still flitting from church to church even within the same denomination, like bees going from flower to flower in search of nectar—here a little, there a little — but never finding quite enough; we now began again to attend some Catholic services with Nancy and Harry Walsh, and other events such

as *Taize* with Fr Kevin Walsh. We felt quite comfortable in Catholic services and increasingly disturbed at the Anglican ones we still attended, which now seemed to have become more nonconformist and irreverent.

It seemed to me that in the majority of Protestant Churches, once the 'preliminaries' were over, the congregation sat back to be entertained (hopefully by a good preacher), with a long sermon, sometimes with the Eucharist fitted in at the end. The sermon was the focal point, not the Crucified Christ!

When we both gave up driving in 2012, the only church within walking distance was St Mary Immaculate, where we were warmly welcomed and enjoyed the services, which we felt were Christ-centred and reverent. We were now certainly hovering around the periphery of Catholicism, but it never occurred to us to take that next step. If you think we were slow to 'catch on', you are right! We were!

Before my husband passed away in 2014, he expressed the wish that Rev Geoff Bates should take his funeral service. Although it was some time since we had attended his church, he had visited Frank in hospital and was a great support to me at this time of my loss. A few years later I contacted him about my own funeral arrangements and subsequently he arranged transport for me to attend Riverstone Anglican Church.

It was there I met Mark and Wendy Slee. Mark, also English, had gone to school in Taunton, Somerset, close to where I had gone to school in Yeovil. As we talked, I learnt he was a Catholic convert, and upon learning of my pro-Catholic outlook, he offered many times to take me to a service at St Pat's Cathedral. Health reasons have prevented me taking up his offer so far, but Mark was to play a very large part in the closing stages of my journey to Rome!

By now I had many Catholic friends in the neighbourhood — everywhere I turned I seemed to meet another! My hairdresser is a Catholic, my ophthalmologist and his secretary are also Catholics. I had great conversations — not on doctrine — with all these people. As I became more aware of this, I said, "*Lord, what are you trying to tell me?*"

Late in 2020, due partly to the pandemic situation, I found myself without any pastoral care at all. One afternoon in mid-November I was having one of my long chats with Geraldine, who had welcomed us that first Sunday we attended St Mary Immaculate. She still remains a very good friend. I learnt afterwards that she had been praying for me and she told me that day some remark of mine, made her think I would become a Catholic.

"*Oh no*" I replied. "*I couldn't become a Catholic now.*"

Two days later, something, (or Someone!) led me to ring Mark Slee, the only non-cradle Catholic I know, with the question, "*How do I become a Catholic?*"

After we talked for a while, Mark moved quickly. He said he would lend me a book which had helped him on his own journey into Catholicism, but within twenty-four hours I had five books! *Cont'd next page*



## Margaret's Story continues

Which to read first? I settled upon Scott Hahn's book, "Rome, Sweet Home", and could not have made a better choice. I was fascinated and could not put the book down. Here was this man, a Presbyterian minister although from a very different back-ground, with the same beliefs as mine, writing frankly of his, at first reluctant, journey to Rome. Wow!

Christmas intervened, but a week after I had first spoken with Mark, I made my decision, guided by the peace in my heart after a lot of reading, searching the Scriptures and prayer. I had to be sure I was not acting because of dissatisfaction with Anglican and Pentecostal Churches over the years, but by conviction.

Early in January, 2021 through Mark, I had the first of five enjoyable and instructive visits from Deacon Rod Pirotta from St Patrick's Cathedral. I had a lot of questions, but I had a lot of good answers, and I began to see that, as a Protestant I had been feeding from scraps in the kitchen, instead of partaking of the banquet in the dining room — the abundant life that Jesus died to give us (Jn 10:10).

One of my friends loaned me her copy of the RCIA manual, which I found extremely helpful, but I wanted my own copy so I could mark and highlight it as I studied. I was delighted when Deacon Rod gave me a copy for my birthday in March.

On May 7th I was confirmed into the Catholic Church



by Fr Oliver, Parish Priest of St Mary Immaculate, Quakers Hill and received my first Eucharist as a Catholic. Surely it was no coincidence that this was my wedding anniversary, for I am sure that, if my husband had still been here, he would have come on my journey with me.

I have a lot yet to learn — and a lot to unlearn! But I am grateful for my early grounding in the Scriptures— so much of which still stays with me, although I now study the New Testament with new eyes to see what it really does, or does not say; not what I thought, and was taught that it did!

My most grateful thanks go to Mark, Deacon Rod and all my many Catholic friends and acquaintances who,



Mark Slee and Deacon Rod Pirotta, companions on Margaret's journey.

too numerous to mention by name, have also, perhaps unknowingly, helped me along my journey towards the peace and joy I now know within, as I continue to discover more and more of the riches of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

**Thanks be unto God for His inexpressible gift.  
2 Cor. 9:15**



Fr Oliver, Mark, Geraldine, Wendy (Mark's wife) & Angela. Angela & Geraldine are parishioner friends from St Mary Immaculate.

## A Note from Dylan Baker, Another 'New' Catholic.

At Easter I received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. It was an amazing transformative experience. I would like to thank the parishioners and clergy of St Patrick's Cathedral for making me feel so welcome and in particular the RCIA team for their support and enthusiasm. I am loving being a Catholic and I am looking forward to deepening my faith with you all.

God Bless

Dylan, left with Susioni and Joel celebrating after the Easter Vigil ➔





# Devotion to the Divine Mercy matters

Marthe Nalletamby shares her experience of Divine Mercy Sunday

**D**ivine Mercy Sunday (also known as the Feast of Divine Mercy) is celebrated on the Second Sunday of Easter. This year it was celebrated on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

From the diary of St Faustina, we read that Jesus said to her,



**“Humanity will never find peace until it turns with trust to Divine Mercy.”**

John Paul II said that Divine Mercy is the Easter gift that the Church receives from the risen Christ and offers to humanity. (22<sup>nd</sup> April 2001: Sunday of Divine Mercy- John Paul II- [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va))

This year a group of friends who meet daily for prayers (via Zoom) were inspired by entries from St Faustina’s diary (Jesus said to St Faustina: **My daughter, tell the whole world about My Mercy**) to organise a day of prayer and Adoration to mark the feast. When Father Peter Lamont from Holy Name of Mary Parish, Rydalmere, was approached for help he generously agreed to make the parish church available and also to officiate on the day.

Lots of hard work by a small group of people went into making the day a success. This group encountered a lot of hurdles and difficulties along the way, but never gave up. They knew that they were doing God’s will by spreading the devotion of Divine Mercy to others who might not otherwise encounter it.

The celebration started at 1pm with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament accompanied by reflections from St Faustina’s diary and the chaplet of Divine Mercy. Confession was also available, and many took advantage of the Sacrament. At 3pm the Blessed Sacrament was taken in procession protected by a canopy following the Church’s tradition, with incense and candles through the streets of Rydalmere. The crowd followed with reverence and were lead in prayers and hymns by yet another volunteer.

Being part of this procession took me right back to my childhood in Mauritius, when such processions were common practice. As a child, for me it was just an opportunity to get dressed up and meet with friends. But now, as an adult, It means so much more, not only to participate in veneration but to publicly profess my faith.

The day concluded with Mass being offered to give those who desired it the opportunity to receive Holy Communion.

After Mass we all met in the school hall where an absolute feast had been provided by a very generous soul. The highlight was the magnificent cake with the inscription “Jesus I trust in you.”

All those involved in pulling this event together feel very blessed to have had the opportunity to extend the invitation for many to assemble as God’s people to pray and venerate together. We hope that next year the number will soar and many more will join us.

Thanks be to God for inviting us to the great banquet of mercy on Divine Mercy Sunday!

There is a short video that can be viewed on YouTube on this link <https://youtu.be/IBgbMFoPgk4>.

(The Procession can also be viewed at <https://fb.watch/5bvILLG41/>)

Check out photos of the ‘absolute feast’ and cake on page 18

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**Sincere thanks from the Coordinators to**  
Father Peter Lamont and Fr Benedict for officiating at the sacraments.  
New Ark Films who captured the solemnity we intended at the Divine Mercy Sunday celebration.  
Everyone who participated and volunteered.



# Remembering Matters: "LEST WE FORGET"



A Memorable Moment:  
Felicitas (AKA Gira) proudly holds the wreath representing the Sri Lankan Community, which she later laid at the Cenotaph during the service on the 106th Anzac Day Anniversary.



Felicitas Appathurai, aged 97, was nominated by Roderick Hilliker to be given the honour of placing a wreath representing the Sri Lankan Community at the 2021 Dawn Service held at the Alfred Square Cenotaph Parramatta on Sunday, 25 April, 2021. What an honour it was!

Accompanied by daughter Sylvie, she did a great job, witnessed by a crowd of approximately 1,000 among which were many family members. \*\*

At age 19, Felicitas worked as a Radar Plotter with the Royal Ceylon Air Force during World War II, and to this day talks very fondly about her role which certainly added to the glory of her task on this very chilly April morning.

It now seems that love of her service with the Armed Forces during World War II has filtered through to her grandchildren & great grandchildren: she has two grandsons in the Victorian Police Force, two great-grandsons with the Australian Defence Force and an 18-year old great-granddaughter who plans to join the NSW Police Force this year.

Congratulations Felicitas – all your family and friends were very proud to share in your joy at being chosen along with all the other representatives to pay tribute to those who paid the ultimate price in defence of their countries.



\*\* Readers will be impressed to learn that this diminutive nonagenarian is truly deserving of the title 'matriarch'. Her family comprises 7 children, (3 boys, 4 girls), 15 grandchildren and 28 great grandchildren!!



Above left Felicitas is hugged by great grandson Ayden, who is in the Australian Defence Forces and at right with daughter Lynette.

## WORTH REFLECTION

25 April 2021

WHAT A CONTRAST!

GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY IS ALSO ANZAC DAY.

Peace and war.

Yet in both peace and war women and men who choose to respond as 'he who was rejected' lived, lay down their lives in the service of love, goodness and truth.

Does laying down one's life lead merely to death or does it enable the taking up of unimagined new life? Can you imagine what your new life might look like and feel like?

Gifted and chosen, think of God's lavish love.

You who were born in the image of God, choose His likeness!

Daily Gospel Reflections  
Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn



The medal Felicitas is wearing is the Defence Medal issued to service personnel who served in World War II 1939-1945. Felicitas only came to receive the medal some years ago thanks to the intervention of Rod Hilliker, who wrote to the appropriate authorities to secure one for her. She is particularly grateful for Rod's thoughtfulness, as all her records of service were lost in floods in Sri Lanka well before she emigrated to Australia. At least she now has this medal to remember her contribution to the war effort.





# Faith Formation Matters

On Friday 23rd April, **LIVE CHRIST SHARE CHRIST** and **THE CATHOLIC TOOLBOX** collaborated in a Formation Session, aiming to guide parishioners to follow the call of Jesus through teaching and to develop tools to learn about and to live the Catholic Faith in real ways.

As MC for the evening, George Manassa, founder of *The Catholic Toolbox*, introduced Deacon Roderick Pirotta, who was presenting the talk, **“Fruits of the Holy Spirit”**. George also said the session was to be live-streamed.



Stan Lobo shared his comments about the topic.

Deacon Rod focused on the two Gifts **‘Charity’** and **‘Joy’** and beautifully expounded on the causal relationship between the two. He clearly illustrated how *Joy* is a logical outcome of the *Gift of Charity*. His deep knowledge of the context of ‘love’ in the Gospel in the different situations in the bible was adeptly explained e.g. ‘Love’ in Greek has the following synonyms ‘Eros’, or sexual passion, ‘Philia’, or deep friendship, ‘Ludus’, or playful love, ‘Agape’, or love for everyone, ‘Pragma’, or longstanding love, ‘Philautia’, or love of self. He sighted the various situations explaining the context of love i.e. Philia and Agape in the Gospel. The talk was thought-provoking and insightful and increased my understanding and appreciation of ‘Love’ in the Bible.

Stan was happy to contribute the following information:

- ◆ I have been attending Live Christ Share Christ Formation Sessions for the last four years.
- ◆ I like attending the sessions because LCSC is a forum for



Michael & Marietta, coordinators of *Live Christ Share Christ* are in the fifth year of providing monthly formation sessions, retreats and Lectio Divina in the Cathedral Parish, as well as bringing good cheer to the elderly in nursing homes every Christmas Season, by singing carols.

The Pentecost Retreat this year was organised for Saturday, 22nd May. Presenters were Fr Chris del Rosario who presented the morning session and Annette Hartman the session following the lunch break.

## JOHN & DONNA MISSIO had this to say about being there:

After a year of very limited social activities in our Parish due to COVID-19, we were very happy to attend the recent Pentecost Retreat hosted by **Live Christ Share Christ** with Fr Chris del Rosario and Ms Annette Hartman as guest speakers.

Fr Chris spoke on the Holy Spirit in relation to Our Lady, referencing a book he had recently read by Dr Brant Pitre. Fr Chris’ talk revealed a new perspective on the relationship between Our Lady and the Holy Spirit using scriptural references from both the Old Testament and the New Testament, showing how Mary allowed her life to be guided by the Holy Spirit. He also explained how Mary is the new Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament carried everything that was most revered and treasured by the Jewish people and Mary, in her time, carried Jesus who was to be the One who saved us.

Annette began with the disclaimer that she had not studied theology but that her talk would be her personal thoughts on Pentecost. Annette is a very gifted speaker, and while she may not have studied theology, but through her extensive travels in the Holy Land and her own comprehensive knowledge of the Bible, she is able to speak in detail about the time, places, people and Jewish customs of when Jesus lived. She highlighted the fact that the Apostles being Galileans, were not from an area of well-educated citizens.

Pentecost is a very familiar story, yet Annette described with great enthusiasm how the Apostles received the Holy Spirit with wonder and awe, each in a unique and wondrous way.

Being able to share this reflection day with other people was more meaningful particularly after our recent experiences of separation and isolation due to COVID restrictions. We appreciate the efforts of Michael and Marietta Guillemo, LCSC Co-ordinators, in organising the retreat day. We also thank Fr Chris and Annette for the time and preparation they put into their talks, which helped us to experience Pentecost this year with fresh perspectives.

Community Prayer and Song which increases my relationship with the Holy Spirit. The talks and sharing enrich my knowledge of the teachings of Christ and help me focus on the Spiritual aspect of the Catholic Faith.

- ◆ I recommend the LCSC Formation series as a way of keeping one focused in daily life plus the added benefit of adding to one’s Spirituality.





**RACQUEL LA ROSA shares her insight on the Retreat.**

The birth of the Church happened during Pentecost when the Holy Spirit made us united in listening to the Word of God. Here at St Pat's we celebrated the Church's birthday by holding a Pentecost Retreat. It started with Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament in the Chapel.

Then we moved to the hall where Fr Chris gave a talk on "Our Lady and the Holy Spirit".

For us to understand the New Testament, we need to refer to the Old Testament. For example, the Ark of the Covenant is the dwelling of God's presence and its tent is empowered by the Holy Spirit. Then in the Annunciation, Mary becomes the Ark.

Mary was with the disciples in the Upper Room when tongues of fire appeared (signifying the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.) It is through prayer that we can reach God and Mary shows us how to pray — in the Magnificat she surrenders herself fully to God. Mary would have led the disciples to prayer. So the true Babel, meaning gate of heaven, is Mary. (as opposed to the Babel of the Old Testament.) Through Mary and sincere prayers we can transform our hearts towards God, by the action of the Holy Spirit.

The next part of the retreat, "Breaking Open the Word" was presented by Annette Hartman. She not just expounded comprehensively the meaning of the Pentecost Sunday Readings, but also provided some historical background.

The Advocate is the Spirit of Truth who will open our hearts and minds to the mystery of the crucified and risen Christ. Jesus also says, "Everything the Father

has is mine", meaning He and the Father are one, which He revealed through his earthly ministry. Since the Holy Spirit is also one with the Father, He will now lead the disciples as well as future generations in transmitting the fullness of truth.

An example of the working of the Holy Spirit guiding our clergy to the truth, is when Pope Pius on 8<sup>th</sup> of December 1854 declared that the Blessed Virgin Mary is preserved from original sin. In 1898, just four years later, Mary appeared to St Bernadette at Lourdes and revealed herself as the Immaculate Conception.

This Pentecost Retreat has truly inspired me to study more the Word of God and its meaning. The historical background enabled me to feel what was going on during those times when the Readings were written. Annette's talk "Breaking Open the Word" has now made me want to explore and learn the origins of the verses of the Bible.

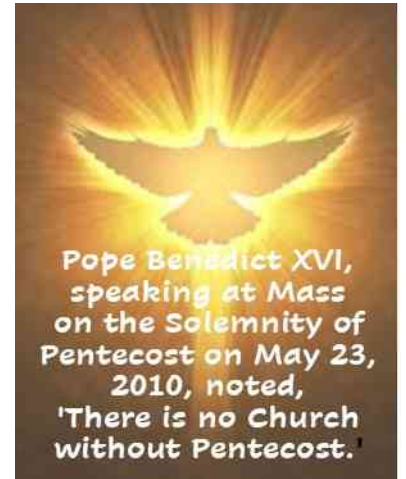
Likewise, after listening to Fr Chris' talk on "Our Lady and the Holy Spirit", I will endeavour to examine more closely how the readings from the Old and New Testaments are linked. At Mass, we listen to the same Readings and Gospel often. Each time, let us ask the Holy Spirit to guide us to understand their messages, which may differ depending on our states of life.

Pentecost, being the birth of the Church, calls us to seek God's Word and spread the Good News. Let us Live Christ and Share Christ daily.

The presenters and sharers of the Pentecost Retreat are in the group photo above:

- Donna Missio:** 1st from left
- Racquel la Rosa:** 4th from left
- John Missio:** 5th from left
- Annette Hartman:** 7th from left
- Fr Chris** 9th from left

**Worth Reflection**



*Without Pentecost the Christ-event - the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus - remains imprisoned in history as something to remember, think about and reflect on. The Spirit of Jesus comes to dwell within us, so that we can become living Christs here and now.*

**Henri Nouwen**

Since Fr Chris made reference to Dr Brant Pitre in his talk, John and Donna checked him out online:

Dr. Brant Pitre is a Distinguished Research Professor of Scripture at the Augustine Institute, Graduate School of Theology.

He earned his Ph.D. in Theology from the University of Notre Dame, where he specialized in the study of the New Testament and ancient Judaism.

He is the author of the best-selling books, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist*, *The Case for Jesus*, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary*,

He is also author of *Jesus and the Last Supper*, co-author with John Bergsma of *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: The Old Testament*, and co-author with Michael P. Barber and John Kincaid of *Paul, a New Covenant Jew*.

Dr. Pitre has also produced dozens of [video and audio Bible studies](#), in which he explores the biblical foundations of Catholic faith and theology (available at [BrantPitre.com](#)).

# Honouring Mothers Matters

## Parramatta Marist High Mothers and Sons Mass 2021

On Tuesday 11 May, year 8 boys from Parramatta Marist High, along with their mothers, teachers and Fr Robert Riedling, gathered at the cathedral for a Mothers and Sons Mass. Thank you to Nicole Denniss (PMH), the PMH student and staff musicians, PMH staff and Fr Robert for their work in planning and delivering a beautiful evening. Here are some reflections from mother and son parish attendees.

**Ben Aguiliera:** The Year 8 Mother/Son Mass has been a long standing tradition at Parramatta Marist and I was glad to share it with my own mum this year. For me the highlight was presenting my mum with a rose and a letter telling her how much I love her and the ways she is like Mary. This year at Marist we are learning about how Mary teaches us how to love and follow Jesus, and have trust even in dark times. I am happy that our Marist family honours Mary and teaches us to follow Jesus *"In the way of Mary"*. I am proud that we are encouraged to honour our own mums in the same way Jesus honoured Mary.

**Kirrily Aguiliera:** The Mother/Son Mass was very beautiful and an experience I will always treasure. I felt a swell of pride seeing Ben and all his classmates looking so grown up in their Marist uniform and participating in the Mass with such prayerful reverence. So much effort had gone into making the liturgy meaningful and engaging. The music was outstanding, Fr Robert's preaching was inspiring and practical and being presented with a rose and a beautiful letter by Ben at the end melted my heart! At a time when the identity and role of young men are being challenged, I feel so affirmed that at Parramatta Marist, a key pillar is *"In the way of Mary"*. I am pleased the young men are encouraged to develop a devotion to Our Lady and to learn from her humility, trust, gentleness and complete devotion to her Son, Jesus.

**Daniel Pinto:** The 2021 Year 8 Mothers and Sons Mass for Parramatta Marist was definitely a great success. We gathered in the courtyard and headed in for the ceremony. It was a beautiful Mass, and I am certainly grateful that we could have this Mass despite the COVID restrictions in place. My mum is someone really special to me; she is my mentor, my guide, my inspiration and someone I can always count on and turn to when in need of something. I appreciate all the things that my mum does every day, and I always will; I am grateful for all the sacrifices mothers make for their children, and it is inevitable that they play an integral role in one's childhood. The atmosphere was great as we presented our letters to our mothers along with a rose. Our mothers are the everyday heroes who don't wear a cape, who raise us and want the best for us. Following our Year 8 Marist Pillar of *"In the Way of Mary"*, this night was important for Year 8 students because our mothers show the attributes of Mother Mary. I would like to thank the staff, students and Cathedral for allowing us to celebrate this special night. Thanks mum and all mothers for everything you do!



Fr Robert flanked L-R by  
Jayden Lawrence & Mum Premila; Ben & Mum Kirrily;  
Aidan & Mum Claire; Mum Charlotte and son Daniel.

**Charlotte Pinto:** What a fabulous tribute that commenced with a beautiful Mass to commemorate Mother's Day at St Pat's. Hats off to all the teachers who organised and carried out this celebration so wonderfully, followed by some delicious supper. It was such a kind gesture and so touching for us mums. We are so very proud of the school. Thank you Mr Mark Pauschman and your fantastic team.

**Jayden Lawrence:** On Tuesday the 11th May students of Year 8 from Parramatta Marist High School attended the Mothers and Sons Mass. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the congregation could not participate in singing; however this did not dampen the cohort's spirit. Our love and spirituality were evidently reflected in our prayers and adoration towards God and our mothers. It was a great opportunity for us to present to our mothers a rose and a heartfelt message after the Mass.

The Year 8 cohort enjoyed the Mass at the cathedral and enjoyed delicious snacks after the Mass. We took this day as just one of the many opportunities to show our mothers how thankful and grateful we are for everything they do for us.

**Aidan Pospischil:** The Mothers and Sons Mass was a great experience for everyone. It was a very immersive experience for our year group, as our focus for this year is to follow in Mary's footsteps, which is the whole purpose of this Mass. Most of the students enjoyed going to the Mass. For my mum and me, it was a great time, we really enjoyed going to the Mass together, and generally just having a great time. The restrictions in place against singing indoors kind of made it a bit annoying, as I was actually looking forward to doing that.

**Claire Pospischil:** It was lovely to have time to stop and reflect on the special relationship between mothers and their sons. So many people went to a great effort to make the evening special for us mums. I found the liturgy moving as I sat with Aidan and the other mothers and sons. There was the odd tear as the boys brought their mums letters, written by them, plus a flower.

Fr Robert delivered a thought provoking homily challenging attendees to consider what actions and behaviours would manifest as 'God with skin on' in our lives.





# SRE MINISTRY MATTERS

Serving GOD & Community

On 9th June, the annual gathering for SREs of Parramatta Deanery took place at St Patrick's Cathedral. After the Liturgy, celebrated by the Dean, Fr Robert Riedling, certificates were awarded in recognition of years of service and/or for completion of training courses.

Congratulations to St Pat's SREs, Leo Coleman, for ten years of service and Caitlin Valentin for 5 years. (Narimane Sleimann, not present, was also recognised for 5 years service).



The weekend of 19th/20th June was a busy one for St Patrick's SREs: It was Recruitment Drive Time! This meant an SRE giving a talk at each of the Masses, appealing to people in the congregation to consider volunteering to join this important ministry. Anyone wanting to ask questions were invited to meet Pamela Bain, Parish Co-ordinator and other SREs after the Masses. The 'Drive' netted nine expressions of interest, a situation that has pleased Pamela, for the following reasons:

The Recruitment Drive last November realised 3 new SREs, but then 5 SREs left for a variety of reasons. The current number of teachers is 24; this has led to some teachers generously offering to do more than one class each week. So it's crucial to increase the number of SREs to cover all the classes at the 5 primary public schools — Parramatta, Parramatta East, Parramatta West, Bayanami and Oatlands — and Macarthur Girls' High School, that have SRE lessons.

SREs present at 9:30am Mass on the Sunday received a special blessing from Fr Robert Riedling as encouragement to continue their ministry of spreading the Good News to Catholic children in state schools.



## MEET JOSE ARGUETA ONE OF OUR NEWEST RECRUITS.

My wife, Elsy and I have been parishioners since 2007 when we moved into the North Parramatta area. We were both born in El Salvador and arrived in Australia as refugees with our parents in the late 80s.



We are blessed to have 3 beautiful children Eva 9, Matthias 5 and Maya 4. We have moved out of the Parramatta area and have been living in Lidcombe since 2011, but have continued to attend St Pat's as it holds so many key memories for us, such as our wedding and baptism for two of our kids.

Earlier this year I put my hand up for SRE training, after listening to a catechist doing a Recruitment Talk at a Sunday Mass. My key motivation was my kids; I wanted to expand and learn some new skills in order to help bring them up in the faith. This reality hit home during COVID when Masses were attended online. We were lucky enough to find a children's Mass from Singapore — they had a 10 minute section for kids prior to the full Mass. My kids found it really engaging and I was impressed by how easy it can be to teach kids the faith when you put your mind to it.

I have started attending Year 2 classes at Oatlands Public School. I still have my training wheels on, but I am hoping to take a class on my own in Term 3. I find the kids quite entertaining to watch as they really do have an appetite for Jesus.

We are blessed to send our kids to a Catholic School, I can see that SRE is critical in our society where, from time to time, there is a clear hostility towards Christianity. I am hoping to make an impact with the SRE program and I am fortunate that I can juggle my work duties to fit this in.

I encourage everyone from all walks of life to consider taking on this ministry, in particular fathers, as well as single men.

Re SRE training: I think a mixed model would be of benefit: where lessons are delivered face to face and online — e.g. one week face to face and the other week online. On a personal note, the Zoom training should be recorded or done outside of working hours, otherwise it makes it very hard for people who work, and for me personally, to complete the training.

*Ed Note: Jose was SRE spokesperson at 11am Mass during the Recruitment Drive on June 20. His enthusiasm and commitment for this important ministry were evident in his talk.*



Ray, Norma, Bernadette, Mary, Michael, Maria, Jessy, Anne, Jose, Pamela, parish co-ordinator, Charbel, Fiona, Regional Co-ordinator for Parramatta Deanery





nurturing the gifts and talents of our young people. The year is only halfway through and I have learnt so much and seen so much growth from this group. I cannot wait to see where Christ continues to lead them as the year goes along.



Adoration is part of each session

Dear Friends,

The last time you probably heard about Credo Ministries, would have been back in the February edition of *St Pat's Matters*. We were preparing to relaunch our groups and we hadn't yet had a solid plan or direction in place. All we knew was that with our team of four young adults we would try and recreate a junior, teen and young adult youth group, with the intention to lead and accompany young people along their faith journey.

Fast forward five months and we find ourselves here halfway through the year. Over this time, Credo Ministries has slowly but surely started to relay the foundations for our three youth groups at the parish.

**JUNIOR CREDO**

In February we relaunched our first group, Junior Credo. With youth leaders Mel Fardella and Rachel Touche taking the lead, they welcomed ten eager and excited primary school-aged kids to what would be the first of many sessions. Each child came willingly and ready to engage and learn more about their faith, accompanied by parents who have so diligently committed to bringing them to each fortnight's session.

Over the course of terms one and two we saw our small ten person group grow bigger each week, to the point now where our Junior Credo group has doubled in size. The group over this time have not only learnt to fall deeper in love with Christ through Adoration each session, but to also love and serve each other to create community. Though small and young, these tiny humans have brought such a vibrant presence to our Credo Youth. Each session as we delve into topics of building the church, virtues and being the light of Christ in our lives, they continue to show our leaders the importance of

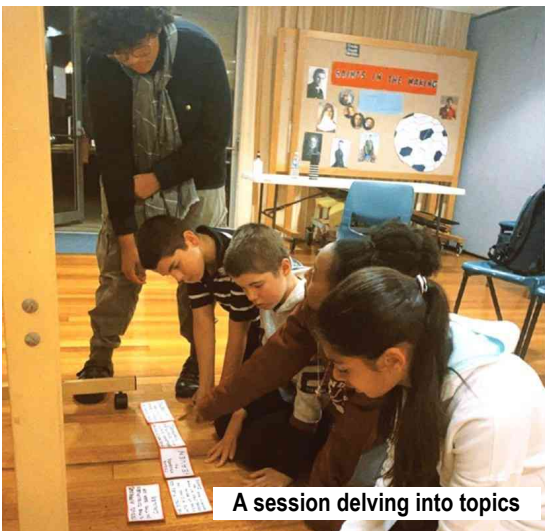
**TEEN CREDO**



Learning about God and how to "set the world on fire."

After seeing the seeds of faith and community start to sprout in Junior Credo, the youth team began to make moves to restart Teen Credo. This group is a group I hold close to my heart, knowing just how much the soul can be converted as a teen after attending Teen Credo throughout my own adolescence. Much like Junior Credo, youth leader Jerick Perez and myself started with a small group in terms one and two, with the main aim and priority being on getting to know our teens.

Over this time, this small group has enjoyed the competitive highs of participating in the "**Credo Olympics**", delving into topics of identity and understanding how in the words of St Catherine of Sienna we can "*set the world on fire*", if we are who we are created to be. The teens of this group have shown they each have a heart for God and yearning to know Him more, and it is quite a privilege and blessing for us to be able to journey with them through this time.



A session delving into topics



Term 1 Credo Olympics



## CREDO YOUNG ADULTS

The final group to restart has been our Credo Young Adults group. After the first session in April, it became increasingly clear that there is a need for the young adults in our parish, and also those in the diocese to have a space of prayer & formation specific to the experiences in their lives.



Attending Adoration offers time for prayer with the Lord

Though we've only just begun this group, it's clear to see that there are some beautiful fruits to come. The young adults team hope that over time, Credo Young Adults will become a beacon for young people to come **listen to the good word** and be able to receive and serve their own communities in their own unique way.



Credo Lifted Sports Day

As we come into the thick of the year, I pray and hope that these three groups will continue to bear the fruits of Christ's unending love. It's been such an honour to serve and lead a team of young adults from our Parish community, who are so willing to give their time and talents towards helping souls find their way to God. Dear friends, I ask that you continue to pray for our Credo groups and our ministry here at St Pat's. — For if we are to serve and lead we cannot do so without your support.

Praying with you and for you.

God bless,

*Genevieve Lee.*

## Credo Group Leaders Matter



Young people ready to guide St Pat's youth in Faith Matters.

Top: **Melissa and Rachel: JUNIOR CREDO LEADERS.**  
Bottom: **Gen, Jerick and Shefin: TEEN CREDO LEADERS**

*If you would like to volunteer your time to lead a group, or to learn more about the Credo groups, please reach out to Genevieve at [credo@stpatscathedral.com.au](mailto:credo@stpatscathedral.com.au) to find out more.*



Recently Credo youth and their families met for a fun Sunday in the park. Just a brief glimpse of some at play in between enjoying a BBQ.





# Getting to know parishioners matters

**WHAT A GOOD IDEA!.....** Soon after his arrival at the Cathedral as the new Dean, Fr Robert initiated a 'getting to know you' column in the weekly Sunday Bulletin, which he also expanded to include a lot more information, even a children's page. We thought is a good idea to include a collation of parishioners' responses in St Pat's Matters, for archival purposes and in case people missed seeing parishioners' submissions in the bulletins.

## HELLO FROM THE POSPISCHILS!



**O**ur family, Claire Steven Brendan and Aidan, attend 9:30am Mass. Steven and I have been cathedral parishioners for 19 years. The cathedral immediately felt comfortable as our

spiritual home when we moved to the area in 2001. We've made many friends across generations in our time here and love the feeling of being part of the cathedral family. A particular point of pride is the welcome given to young families with children attending cathedral Mass, which in our experience is the best of any parish we've attended in Australia on our travels.

Both the boys were baptised here and now that they are bigger, the memories of child-wrangling in the back half of Masses feel more sepia tinged with fondness and less stressful. Within the parish Steven and I are Children's Liturgy leaders, Aidan is a plate collector, while Brendan and I also read. When the boys were younger, I also ran the parents group and was a member of the Vinnies conference.

Outside of the parish, Aidan and Brendan both attend Parramatta Marist High. Steven is an engineer and I'm a biosecurity analyst. Athletics is a shared family interest. Steven coaches race walking and is president of Winston Hills athletics, with both boys being state representative walkers on multiple occasions. Hobbies wise, we love cooking and eating food (particularly the boys), bush walking, bike riding, home brewing, preserving and reading.

## 'BULA' FROM THE LEE FAMILY.



**W**e are a family of five consisting of our mum, Mili, and children Olivia, Chris, Ethan, and Genevieve. If you are a regular at the Sunday 6:00pm Mass, you may have met one or all of us. We have been members of St Patrick's Cathedral community for over 26 years. Since 1995 we have been blessed to serve the community that welcomed us since arriving in Australia from Fiji, in various roles: from cleaning pews, serving barbecues, and serving at Mass, to leading roles such as Youth

Leaders, Chair of Parish Pastoral Council, to coordinating events in the Cathedral.

We have been blessed to serve alongside many wonderful priests and parishioners. Mili now serves as the Cathedral Manager and Genevieve as Credo Youth Leader. Outside parish life (yes, we do have a life outside the parish) we love: the community and competitive spirit in playing sports, the tranquillity of nature in walking and gardening, and sharing our musical talents around home-cooked meals with friends and family.

## KAMUSTA! WE ARE THE MERCADO FAMILY.



L to R Van, Maria, Jesusa, Cora, Usman, Madden, Renato, Mindy, Azaleyah

**W**e have been very blessed to be part of the parish for over 21 years. We enjoy getting involved and giving back to

a parish that has given so much to us, from being involved in the hospitality group, choir, Credo youth groups, serving at Mass and running the gelato stall as a family during the spring fair. We were regular Sunday 6:00pm Mass parishioners but now attend the Sunday morning Masses, depending on our serving schedule. We enjoy coming together and sharing a meal as a family – something we truly treasure with our differing schedules.

## HELLO FELLOW PARISHIONERS, FROM DANNY



**DINGLE**, your erstwhile cantor, who is currently on leave due to a health issue. I first set foot in St Patrick's Cathedral on 17 September 1989. I remember the day well because it was my birthday and the wedding of my sister at the old Cathedral. In 2002, I auditioned to be a cantor with Bernard Kirkpatrick. Thus began my music ministry with the Cathedral. Bernard was

patient enough to mentor me in the intricacies and nuances of cantoring. I was also in the Cathedral Choir for a while. I was instituted as an Acolyte and have served at Masses on weekends and weekdays. On a few occasions I administered Holy Communion to the aged in a nursing home. But the ministry I enjoyed most was as a cantor, which I did for 17 years until I had to take leave due to illness. I miss singing a lot and I keep praying that I will be healed soon so I can resume cantoring. Please include me in your prayers. I hope to sing with you again soon at one of the Masses!



# Getting to know parishioners matters

## BONJOUR, nous sommes la famille Touche "



Hello, we are the Touche family and my name is Cathleen. My husband, Jean-Luc and I have been parishioners of St Patrick's Cathedral since 2001. We are originally from Mauritius and came to Australia in the year 2000. We attended our very first Mass at the Cumberland Chapel while the Cathedral as we know it now was being rebuilt. We have two daughters and a son. Our

eldest, Rachel is part of the youth group leaders, reads at some Masses and works in the gift shop. Our youngest daughter Stacie is a member of the Credo Youth Group and serves at the Sunday 6:00pm Mass, while my husband does the collections. My youngest, son Olivier is part of the Junior Credo and is very excited and looking forward to receiving his First Holy Communion today. We are all members of the Family Rosary Group. We are very blessed to be a part of the parish community, and over the years we have made many friends through the parish that we now call family.

Outside church, we love enjoying outdoor activities such as soccer, volleyball, bike riding (and one in particular loves climbing trees) just to name a few. We also love spending summertime with friends at the beach. The time that we all enjoyed most is sitting around the dinner table while eating a home-cooked meal and sharing the exciting news of the day. On certain days we are blessed to hear the beautiful singing of our daughters who both have amazing voices

## MEET THE LILLEYS

**Cead Mile Failte** in Irish means "a hundred thousand welcomes."



My name is Michael Lilley and I have been a parishioner at St Patrick's Cathedral Parish, since 1983 — 38 years. My parents and I arrived in Australia in 1982 when we immigrated from Northern Ireland.

In 2008 I met the love of my life, Geraldine Lowe to whom I proposed in 2011 at the parish's St Patrick's Day Party. A year later, on 24 November 2012, we were married in St Patrick's Cathedral, with Bishop Anthony Fisher OP as

our Principal Celebrant. Geraldine has been a parishioner of St Patrick's Cathedral Parish for twelve years, (and almost nine years married within the parish community).

We have been involved in Youth and Young Adult Ministry and along with Olivia and Chris Lee and Mindy Mercado were founding members of Credo Young Adults. Geraldine is currently a reader at the 8:00am Sunday Mass and is secretary to the Legion of Mary. I have been an acolyte in the parish since 2011 and currently serve at the 8:00am Sunday Mass and during the week at 6:30am Mass every Monday and Wednesday. I had also been involved with Legion of Mary until recently.

## MEET TERRY O'BRIEN

When two of our seven children have reached their 60<sup>th</sup> birthdays, it forces one to acknowledge that, as parents, we must be pretty old also. And so it is with me, after forty-five years as a parishioner of St Pat's even though theoretically, by moving across Pennant Hills Rd five years ago, I "reside" in another parish. My late spouse, for 56 years of marriage, Ann and I have literally been tied to the hip with St Pat's since moving the 800 kms from Bourke to here, after spending the previous sixteen years, gypsy like in four rural locations. Due in part to Ann's tearful endeavours, having landed in the Big Smoke in the middle of a school year, the kids were squeezed into five different schools all of which seemed to manage coincident school fetes, sporting events and speech nights which, with both of us required to work, left very little of a 24-hour day to ourselves until retirement which allowed us three overseas trips, one with four of our lifetime friends. Four years ago, shepherded by Father Wim, and with the assistance of generous younger parishioners, I managed to follow in the steps of St Paul Pilgrimage through Greece, Malta and Rome safely.

Within the parish, my good friend Paul Mahoney and I were "invited" to be members of the first Parish Finance Committee by the late Fr Brian Larkey, which continued under Fr (now Mons) John Boyle until I was replaced by Ann. She continued that role with Fr Wim Hoekstra, whilst maintaining as long as she could, her most precious role as Eucharistic Minister. I continue my involvement with Vinnies now in its 43<sup>rd</sup> year, at State and local levels, with a passion for social justice issues, and continued as a reader, until collection timing changes at Masses put paid to being in two places at the one time. As dear friend Paula Cowling used to remind us, there is only one way you can leave the collection counting team on Mondays. With 27 years of counting in the Parish to date, and no long service entitlement, I hope to continue until the good Lord blows the whistle for time off.



◀ Ann, as mother of one of our grooms, with Parish Priest Fr John Boyle.



▶ me, 8 years ago, participating in a Diocesan Planning Session, sharing hopes for the future with then Bishop Anthony Fisher.

**TAKE UP THE DEAN'S INVITATION:** *Getting to know you....*

**No matter how long you have been a St Pat's parishioner, consider following the examples of the people featured here and tell us a little about yourself and your family. Email your contribution (max 250 words) plus a jpeg photo of good resolution, to Pat Preca, Parish Secretary, [secretary@stpatscathedral.com.au](mailto:secretary@stpatscathedral.com.au), along with a phone number, in case we need to clarify something. Looking forward to "Getting to know you".**

**MODERN MARY**, shares some of her “trials and tribulations” as a modern mother. She mentions some coping mechanisms, but sees Mary’s faith and gratitude as a panacea for problems that modern mums could adopt to cope.

June 2021

The trials and tribulations of modern motherhood are infinite. The big challenges - no one can argue with. But it’s often the little micro-aggressions against your sanity that break you. My boys are 5 and 9. The eldest is still learning to regulate his frustration when struck with the damnation of a flat iPad. He raids the pantry as though he’s just been rescued from three nights lost in a national park and loves to leave the lid off his toothpaste and then demand a new tube. The youngest trips over eight times a day on average, often falling off a kitchen stool or walking into a glass door. His favourite pastime is letting one rip in a confined space and then laughing as everyone leaps out of the vehicle gasping for air.

Mothers often talk about the importance of ‘self-care’. This fad, promoted by some privileged Karens, capitalises on the reality that no one else will care for you as a mother. And it’s true, all those manis and pedis have clearly led to a legitimate awakening in realising this truth. I’d argue that the toxic nail salon fumes may have even assisted in dulling the pain of realising that there is no one on the planet to rely on to care for you aside from yourself.

As a Christian mother, I wonder how on earth Mother Mary must have coped? Thrust into motherhood through no choice of her own. Chosen to give birth to, and raise, the saviour of the world. The Bible is silent on any indication that Mary may have paused for self-care. In fact, she is centred in her faith that God is caring for her. Can we bottle that? Because if a highly stylised woman named Kaytee tried to sell me that on Instagram, I’d buy it in a heartbeat.

The key is this unique cocktail of faith and gratitude. Every struggle thrown at Mother Mary was a blessing to be grateful for. Each challenge is cushioned by her faith that God would care for her and help her conquer it. It is a consciousness that you are doing someone else’s higher work. It’s hard and it’s thankless and there’s no reprieve, but you’re so grateful and have faith that something beautiful will blossom from it in the end.

*“So then neither he who plants is anything, not he who waters, but God who gives increase.” [1 Corinthians 3:7]*

***The Bible is silent on any indication that Mary may have paused for self-care. In fact, she is centred in her faith that God is caring for her. Can we bottle that?***

At the time of writing, I’m contemplating entering another round of school holidays, an alternate reality where the routine that I’ve been whining about each time I pack lunch boxes is pulled from under our feet and I’m left reeling at the thought of having to actually spend the entire day with my children. It will be a war of attrition. Except, there is no trench.

You don’t get to retreat to catch a breath or replenish ammunition. Only the enemy gets to rest and recover. But in the motherhood battlefield, every beaten soldier holds a fervent sense of gratitude. ‘But, ...thank God’ – all my friends say. And so do I.

If this resonates with you, share your stories with us at [modernmarymums@gmail.com](mailto:modernmarymums@gmail.com). Join the conversation about how on earth to survive the challenging vocation of motherhood as modern Christian women.

## Divine Mercy Sunday

Cont’d from page 8



On Divine Mercy Sunday, after the Procession and Mass at the Holy Name of Mary Parish Rydalmore, people gathered in the hall for “an absolute feast” The highlight was the two magnificent cakes pictured, bearing inscriptions pertaining to the Feast Day being celebrated.



# An Indomitable Spirit Matters



Regrettably in this issue, readers will not be treated to **Judith Dunn's** regular foray into **History and Heritage Matters**.

She is having treatment for eye-sight problems, (details adjacent). This prevents any lengthy computer work. In lieu of an historical piece, she did dash off what she called 'a little filler' by way of compensation.

Pray for Judith that the treatment is successful, enabling her return to pursuing her love of all that is historical.

**From the Editor:** I greatly enjoy receiving Judith Dunn's emails: snippets of local history with talk of other activities — some of a charitable nature — casually interwoven, making for entertaining reading. They also reveal a woman of remarkable qualities and indomitable spirit. That's why I wanted to share a few with readers. I sought Judith's permission, she graciously acquiesced.

When I wrote on 20th May about an article for this issue of *St Pat's Matters*, Judith promptly replied,

*I am afraid I am going to let you down this time. I am so sorry. On Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May, I am scheduled for an eye operation and on 7<sup>th</sup> June another op on the other eye. I have started to lose peripheral vision due to high pressure (glaucoma) and the specialist is going to put stents in my eyes to see if that will ease it. I also have diabetic changes behind the eyes (I have been diabetic for 25 years) plus a condition called 'dry eyes' which she assures me will get worse after the op but will save my sight — the best option. Every woman in my family is a diabetic — an hereditary type that follows the female line. Everyone, from my grandmother, mother, aunts, five sisters and now our daughters, are diabetic. Such a nuisance!*

*Due to all these eye issues I am allowed only 15 – 20 minutes at a time on the computer. I can hardly compose my thoughts in that time, let alone get any serious work done.*

*The tour with the nuns was lovely and one has sent me good information on Mons Rigney since the tour. It was such a lovely day and I think looking at the beautiful scenery really lifts the spirits – **I will lift up mine eyes to the hills.** [outcome of event cited in email 22/3 : On tour – in my real life I am a tour operator, organising coach and walking tours. I actually had a group of retired sisters on board from retirement/over 50s housing. Sisters of Mercy & the Good Samaritan etc. A lovely group on an awful day!]*

*We have just arrived home from a conference in Canberra where we met up with friends from all over Australia – we meet once a year for 7–10 days. We work for Lions, the largest charity group in the world. Greg and I check children's eye sight before they start school and refer them to professionals if we find any issues. We go to kindergartens and pre-schools to undertake the checks. Lions have provided us with an \$8,000 special camera which can cleverly diagnose five eye conditions! We are trying to break into schools in NSW, but the Education Department is agonisingly slow, so we are off to Port Macquarie between my ops (while I cannot drive or do computer work ) to test a sports club.*

*Email 6/4/21 sent at Easter from their 1910 Berrima cottage Except for Easter Sunday I have been setting up a tour of "Vice Regal Highlands" for three days starting Friday. 16 NSW Governors took summer holidays in the Southern Highlands so there are many connections and grand houses to visit plus the vice regal waiting rooms at the station and the vice regal church. The people are flying in from Victoria so I must be on my toes to give them the best tour possible. I have been dashing around checking weight limits on roads, over hanging branches, (under 4 m) turning circles for coaches, checking routes between venues, making sure gates are wide enough for coaches to enter etc. Now I just have to build my commentary on each site and the tour route between sites. Lots of dashing around before I sit on the coach serenely and hopefully deliver an interesting and informative commentary!*

## Judith's Delightful 'Little Filler'.

### *The Beauty and Bounty of Autumn.*

22nd May, 2021

I have been busy at my cottage in Berrima, managing to chase the currawongs out of the fig tree by day, but while I am in bed, the bats come in for the night shift. I have only managed to make three jars of fig jam this year despite a large crop.

The air has been exhilaratingly cold so I sat beside a crackling log fire which made me sleepy. On turning down the doona to get into bed there was a nasty surprise – a gang of mice had decided to come in out of the cold and invaded our warm and cosy bed. I slept on the veranda that night, thinking if I remade the bed they might get in with me!

Since then the mice have been very bold, doing laps around the house while we watch in amazement. They will not be enticed to taste the poison we have put temptingly around the cottage for them and there is not a mousetrap to be had in local shops. We leave them to it and have a cup of tea in the sun on the veranda where the rich aroma of ripe figs fills the air. When the breeze stirs, the leaves of the oak tree wave goodbye to summer as they float down and carpet the lawn.



A possum has taken up residence in the outside laundry and has dragged a bed of leaves into the fire hole of the old copper.

The colours of the autumn leaves would put the best stained glass to shame and the shrubs have an amazing amount of berries this year to keep the wildlife well fed through the winter.



So you see despite mice, bats and currawongs, the glorious bounty of autumn



delights us and life is gentle and beautiful.



*(Judith later emailed: At Mass this morning I was struck with part of the responsorial psalm which underlined the wealth of Autumn in the little snippet I sent you –*

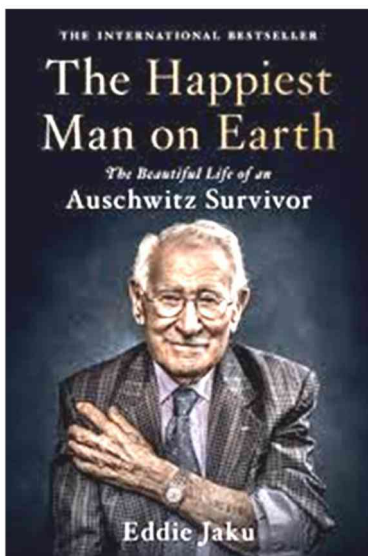
**How many are your works O Lord!  
The earth is full of your riches.**

Go gently,  
**Judith**

Terry O'Brien, St Pat's parishioner since 1976, and dedicated member of Parramatta Conference of Vinnies, took up residence in Courtlands Retirement Village in July 2015. Almost immediately he set about engaging in the community's welfare there, duplicating his involvement as a dedicated volunteer on the parish scene.

On 6th April, at the first formal meeting since lockdown, Terry put forward to residents and staff a remedy for combatting the negative impact COVID-19 had inflicted on people's mental health during that time.

During the recent blackout and collapse of our free to air TV transmission in the Village, I took the opportunity to complete my reading of *The Happiest Man on Earth* by Eddie Jaku, real name Abraham Salomon Jakubowicz or Adi to his friends — in



English, Eddie. Some of you may already know his story. Anyone care to tell us?

It struck me that, as we are slowly coming out of our dark, to some a frightening and somewhat lonely twelve months of an unfinished world-wide pandemic, consideration of just a tiny part of Eddie's philosophy on life after his miraculous survival from the Holocaust, might also be worthwhile for others. It certainly made an impact on me .

**Because he did survive ,  
he made a vow to smile every day.**

Despite everything he has endured , he now believes he is the happiest man on earth.

With your indulgence, may I continue for a few more minutes?

His book, published as he turned 100, provides a hopeful memoir for me, just after a joyful Easter, of someone indicating how happiness can be found even when we seem to be surrounded by darkness Observations revealed in his epilogue I find worth repetition and remembering.

- ◆ Don't blame others for your misfortunes. No one has ever said life is easy, but it is easier if you love it.
- ◆ Life is not always happiness. Sometimes there are many hard days. But you must remember you are lucky to be alive — we are all lucky this way (especially in this country compared to say the current situation in Brazil.)
- ◆ Every breath is a gift. Life is beautiful if you let it be. Happiness is in your hands.
- ◆ Take time to appreciate every moment of your life, the good, the bad. Sometimes there will be tears. Sometimes laughter. And if you are lucky there will be friends to share it all with.

I'll conclude with his opening quote from an anonymous source

***Don't walk behind me, I may not lead.  
Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow.  
Just walk beside me and be my friend.***

Notwithstanding what might seem her sometimes wacky sergeant major like demands, may I suggest the newly crowned great grandmother seated beside me [Sandra Ackers] adopts and epitomises the same philosophy and attitude to life as Eddie, on behalf of all of her fellow residents of Courtlands. So friend, Sandra thank you and all of your elves for helping us through these dark and still uncertain days.

As a follow-up to the meeting Terry sent the following email to Lisa Green, the manager of Courtlands Retirement Village.

*Dear Lisa,*

*As 6th April marked the first formal meeting of our Self Care Residents Social and Recreation meeting through virtually twelve months of isolation, I felt it appropriate — and it was accepted — that I inform them of the attitude to life of a German Jew expressed in his book published on his 100th birthday. I was gratified at the subsequent socialising attitude displayed subsequent to the conclusion of the formal meeting.*

*As approximately one third of our Self Care residents were present, it would seem appropriate, if you concur, to reach the other residents through the back page of the monthly calendar. Sandra Ackers has no objection to my proposal.*

*It seems significant also, that the Secretary General of UNESCO and also Pope Francis, on the 76th (digitised because of COVID restrictions) anniversary last January commemorating the liberation of survivors of Auschwitz, warned us of the risk of repetition of genocide in our current environment; Pope Francis warned us to keep a close watch on ideological extremism such as that displayed by some supporters of the previous US President, as evidenced on 6th January.*

*Regards*

***Terry.***

*Footnote: The same day our May Calendar of Village Events was circulated in late April, at the annual Sydney Writers' Festival, Eddie, now 101, was announced as the 2021 prize winner for "Best Biography" for his **Happiest Man on Earth**. On 4th June I sent him a letter informing him of our local action inspired by his book and congratulated him on his award. (To date no response.)*

From the Editor:

*There's an old saying that someone's 'blood is worth bottling.' Our Terry is definitely a candidate!*

*An indefatigable 89-year old, Terry's enthusiasm for being involved in good works and persisting in caring for anyone in need, certainly makes him an admirable role model..... "Some-one to copy", as was said of Australia's first saint, Mary MacKillop of the Cross.*

*Look elsewhere in this issue for his contribution to Fr Riedling's **Getting to Know You**. And you'll be able to see what he looks like!*



# Solving a mystery matters



It's obvious from their appearance these objects are of a sacred nature. And their intricate ornate design bespeaks crafting many decades ago. Would any reader like to hazard a guess as to what purpose these items served?.. Revelation later.

There's more to their mystery. After the death of long-time parishioner June Barrett last December, her five daughters and families set about clearing their mother's house ready for sale. I had lived across the road from June since 1979 and, apart from our relationship as good neighbours, we also shared a close faith bond, due to being St Pat's parishioners.

June had assiduously spent years compiling archival material and a Timeline of the history of St Patrick's. So, whenever her daughters came across something of parish interest they crossed the street, entrusting it to me to pass onto the Parish Office, hopefully for archival cataloguing.

The last item Fiona, the youngest, brought to me was the wooden box pictured above. The cross on the box's lid indicated it pertained to something Christian. Just visible, on the lower right hand corner of the lid, are ring marks, evidence that at some time it had been used as a coaster — very hard to comprehend, particularly when the box housed sacred objects.

Fiona had no idea what it was all about. She said the box was discovered way at the back of a top shelf of a cupboard in her mother's bedroom. No evidence to indicate why and how long it was in June's possession, where it had come from, whether it was linked to either the Barretts — Jack's family — or the Chesworths — June's family. Hard to believe that June, so devoted to archival matters, failed to document this box's history. Perhaps it had been stored away so long she had forgotten its existence!

A label on the box's bottom simply stated *made in the United States of America*. But the little scoop inside was more revealing. On its bottom was the rather prosaic description "**Sick Call Outfit.**" Further information engraved thereupon: SPECIAL METAL, PAT'D APRIL '97 [surely 1897], Quadruple plated, MOMAN SILVER PLATED CO.

So let's clarify the use of all the contents. Obviously the Kit would have been carried by a priest when visiting the sick. No 1 is the Crucifix with 2 candelabra for candles attached and a font for holy water; No 2 is the stand for the Crucifix; No3 were 2 patens, beautifully engraved with HIS, for the Sacred Host; No 4 the little scoop — which originally those of us viewing the kit in the office thought it was for holy water, — but Fr Chris del Rosario thought it was for distributing the Precious Blood; No 5 is a little brush for dispensing holy water from No 6 which is a little round glass bottle with raised glass lettering stating **FOR HOLY WATER. KEEP CONSTANTLY FILLED.**

It was a privilege to check out this piece of church history. To be able to unravel how it came into June's possession would be the icing on the cake!

*Marian Polizzi*

# A wee bit of humour matters.

Enjoy these gems from



A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales.

The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it was a very large mammal its throat was very small.

The little girl stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible.

The little girl said, "When I get to heaven I will ask Jonah".

The teacher asked, "What if Jonah went to hell?"

The little girl replied, "Then you ask him."

\*\*\*\*\*

A Kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom of children while they were drawing. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's work.

As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was.

The girl replied, "I'm drawing God."

The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like."

Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, "They will in a minute."

\*\*\*\*\*

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six-year-olds.

After explaining the commandment to 'honour thy Father and thy Mother, she asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"

From the back, one little boy (the oldest of a family) answered, "Thou shall not kill."

\*\*\*\*\*

The children were lined up in the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school for lunch. At the head of the table was a large pile of apples. The nun made a note and posted it on the apple tray: "Take only ONE. God is watching." Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies. A child had written a note, "Take all you want. God is watching the apples..."

## A Reflection from Ms Bernadette Fabri



As principal of St Patrick's Primary School Parramatta, I am very proud to be associated with a school that has such a rich history connected to the establishment of Catholic Education in Australia. We know that St Patrick's Parramatta originated from the first Catholic School in

Australia in 1820 and was said to be situated in Hunter Street. It was established by Fr John Therry.

Under the leadership of George Marley the school provided a small number of children the basic subjects of reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic and book-keeping and on Sundays George taught his Catholic students about the faith. The subjects were Catechism, Church History and Christian living. The school was then moved to a building near the Cathedral and then in 1926 to the present site under the guidance of the Sisters of Mercy.

The St Patrick's Parramatta community will be forever grateful to the Sisters of Mercy for their dedication and contribution to the school from 1874 to 1986. The life of Catherine McAuley, the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, inspired our school's key values of Respect, Compassion and Resilience and these values form the basis of our Student Charter. Catherine McAuley was an amazing woman who showed courage beyond her years and her love for children and the importance she held, in the education of girls in particular, has had a lasting influence on many Catholic schools. The school still has a close association with the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta and in fact, I was educated, both at a primary and secondary levels, in Mercy schools. I have very fond memories of my wonderful teachers, many of whom were Sisters of Mercy. I remember many amazing lay teachers, who also left a very positive mark on my education.

Much has changed over the years, but the importance of lay teachers in the education of children in the faith has remained a key factor and we owe them and the sisters our sincere gratitude for the many years of service to Catholic Education.

I was once asked the question, *How does the school preserve its Catholic identity in a time of increased secularism in broader society?* I replied with these thoughts.

Our faith is extremely important to all Catholic schools and to the families we serve. Our Catholic identity is firmly based in Catholic Scripture, Tradition and Context. In keeping with contemporary approaches to learning and teaching, Religious Education has changed over the years to enable teachers to capture the student's natural curiosity as expressed through their questions and wonderings about their faith. This inquiry approach is critical to student engagement because I believe listening to 'student voice' enables teachers and students to have conversations about topics that are important to this young generation - and this discussion takes place within a Catholic worldview.

Catholic schools are diverse communities and are enriched by that diversity.

Our schools are available to all children and families and the respect experienced when participating in genuine dialogue between us not only allows us to grow in our understanding of others, but ultimately helps us to grow in our understanding of ourselves - yes within broader society and in a time of increased secularism. Of course, where enrolment demand in a school is very strong, priority is given to Catholic families. Our students' faith and learning are enhanced by this dialogue and in partnership with parents I believe we are able to succeed in helping to form attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible Catholic adults.

Congratulations to all associated with Catholic Education.

Here's to the next 200 years.

\*\*\*\*\*



On Monday 24th May 2021 the school Vice Captains and leaders of Religious Education, Alexa Izmaytyeva and Dylan Amaral, attended a Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral for the anniversary of 200 years of Catholic Education. The Mass was attended by representatives from all schools in the Parramatta Diocese, as well as system leaders from Catholic Education, Diocese of Parramatta. Alexa's mother, Mrs Stolbova and Mrs Amaral, Dylan's mother, were invited to attend.

Bishop Vincent Long Van Ngyuen celebrated Mass with priests from the diocese, ably assisted by some of the St Patrick's servers. Thank you: Stephanie Jabbour, Ray J Wehbe, Anthony Malek, Anthony Bracks and Phillip Ayoub.

After the Mass the children were then treated to a lovely morning tea and got to meet Bishop Vincent and Executive Director, Mr Greg Whitby. It was wonderful to be a part of this special celebration especially as the school is now well-known to have originated from the very first Catholic School in Australia, originally in Hunter Street.

**TAKE a WALK down MEMORY LANE**  
**Were you educated at St Patrick's Primary or OLMC or Marist Brothers? If so, you're invited to write about any recollections of your time there. Photos would be a bonus! Email to M. Polizzi: [balmapp5@bigpond.com](mailto:balmapp5@bigpond.com) or leave at the parish office marked 'for St Pat's Matters'.**



# So much achieved in 200 years!

from humble beginnings by dedicated priests, religious and Laity

Celebrating  
**200**  
years  
1820-2020

OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN THE DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA



**The Celebrating of 200 Years of Catholic Education in Parramatta sent Parish Manager/parishioner Mili Lee delving into St Patrick's Parish Archives. Her aim was to briefly highlight the early years when Catholic schools were established here, acknowledging the people who took on the challenge to achieve that end.**

As we celebrate 200 years of Catholic Education this year, it is important that we search our parish's history to highlight its contribution to Catholic Education in Australia in partnership with religious orders who assisted in providing education to children of the Parramatta parish community.

When Fr Therry was appointed as an official Catholic chaplain to the colony of New South Wales, he showed a concern for all facets of people's lives, including the education of children. Soon after arriving in Sydney in May 1820, before he established a parish or built a church, Fr Therry founded the first Catholic School in Australia. This school was opened in Hunter Street, Parramatta in October 1820 and was run by George Morley with an initial enrolment of 31 pupils. **This makes St Patrick's Catholic Primary, Parramatta the oldest parish school in Australia.**

When the first St Patrick's Church was built and opened in 1836 there was, next to it, an unfinished stone building. This building was roofed and in 1837 was in use as a school, the Hunter St school having been presumably transferred to Pennant St (now Victoria Rd) about that time.

The parish school was run by lay teachers until 1875 when the school was handed over to the care of the Marist Brothers who were invited by the then parish priest, Archdeacon Rigney, to take over control of the school.

Before the arrival of the Marist Brothers, the Sisters of Charity and the Mercy Sisters were also part of the early years of education in Parramatta. In 1838, eight Sisters of Charity arrived from Ireland to minister to the inmates of the Female Factory at Parramatta. While they were not here as a teaching order, the sisters did assist at the Catholic school. They taught catechism, needlework, and some secular subjects until 1847, when they left Parramatta to work in Sydney.

The first of the educational orders to come to Parramatta was that of the Sisters of Mercy, when three nuns arrived in October 1874 from Liverpool, England, at the request of Archdeacon Rigney, P.P. They began teaching in an old cottage. But later, as enrolment grew, the Sisters built a new convent school building in 1881 in Villiers St, on the north-west corner opposite St Patrick's Church.

Also involved in the early education scene in Parramatta are the Good Samaritan Sisters and the Benedictine Nuns. The Good Samaritan Sisters were sent to Parramatta in 1857 by Bishop Bede Polding to take charge of the Catholic Orphanage there.

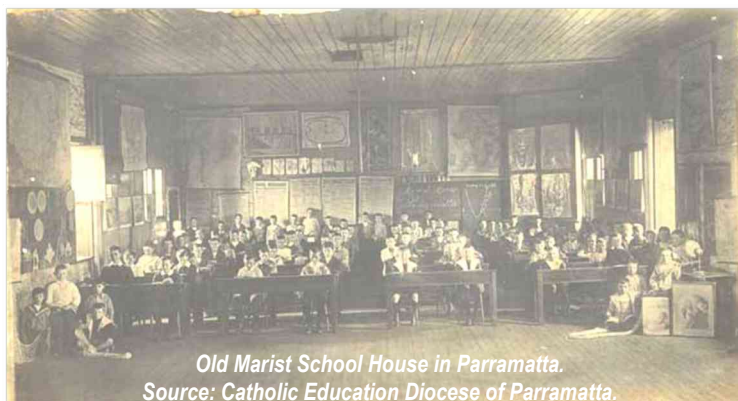
The Benedictine nuns established a convent at "Subiaco", Rydalmere in 1849 and opened a school for girls.

While the contribution of the Good Samaritan Sisters and the Benedictine nuns to education in Parramatta may not be so visible in modern day Parramatta, many of our parishioners would be forever grateful to the education received at St Patrick's Primary and by the Mercy Sisters and Marist Brothers.

As we celebrate 200 years of Catholic education, let us take a moment to remember priests, religious and lay teachers, past and present, who have devoted their lives to educating our children in the faith.



Fr John Therry, Archdeacon Rigney & Archbishop Bede Polding.



Old Marist School House in Parramatta.  
Source: Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta.



Old Marist School in Parramatta:  
Source: Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta

## LOOKING BACK AT SCHOOL DAYS.

**Do you have fond memories of a 'special teacher'? What positive impact did they have on your education? Or maybe you have a comical situation or two to share? Email to M. Polizzi: [balmap5@bigpond.com](mailto:balmap5@bigpond.com) or leave at the parish office, marked 'for St Pat's Matters'.**



# *Sacramental Matters: A Day of Great Joy!*



## *Families gathering in Faith to witness*



## *Their children make their First Holy Communion*



## *Receiving Jesus as Food for their Journey.*