

ST PAT'S MATTERS

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

FAMILIES GATHER TO CELEBRATE FIRST EUCHARIST



plus
MINISTRY & HISTORY MATTERS

EDITORIAL

Top billing, rightly so, goes to the feature of our children's First Holy Communion. Appropriately, following is a reflection by Bernadette Fabri, Principal of St Patrick's Primary, and her recollection of her First Communion Day.

Fr Robert continues the next chapter of his Vocation Story, as well as educating us about the various forms of linen used in the celebration of the Mass.

Readers are treated to a double dose of history, firstly from Monsignor John Boyle's *Pilgrimage to Catholic Parramatta* and then from Judith Dunn's article *Parramatta: Cradle of Faith*, which grew out of the talk she gave at the Seniors' Luncheon.

Phil Slattery's article draws our focus to the Sesquicentenary Celebration of the Marists, paving the way for future features in the next *St Pat's Matters* about their founder and their legacy in Australia, particularly on home ground here in Parramatta.

On the faith front there's coverage of the Pentecost Retreat and the Corpus Christi Procession, the latter a collaborative effort between Our Lady of Lebanon and St Patrick's Cathedral.

It's great to have input from our young people: Mindy Mercado reflects on 20 years as an Altar Server, while Stacie Touch shares what she learnt from attending the Teen Credo Retreat.

Bob Edgar's mission is to shine a light on the shameful treatment of our indigenous in the past; but in his powerful article *We Remember Them* he also talks about healing and reconciliation for past wrongs.

Getting to know parishioners matters is back: check out who has a light shone on their lives.

I leave you to find out why Patrick Newman appears in this edition; what Modern Mary has to say about women's issues; and to enjoy Fatima Rodrick's story about Jesus.

And finally, all will be revealed about what connects St Pat's Parramatta with Widnes, England.

M Polizzi

SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION MATTER FIRST HOLY COMMUNION



June 19th, 2022 saw a milestone event in the lives of these 38 youngsters: they received their First Eucharist, the second sacrament on their faith journey — Baptism was the first; Confirmation will be the third and final Sacrament completing their full initiation into the Catholic Church.

CONGRATULATIONS FROM ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL PARISH TO THESE CHILDREN ON THE CELEBRATION OF THEIR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION.

Marcella Louris Abboud

Juan Abin

Sophie Celene Abraham

Elias Allen

Lily Stella Arojan

Savannah Grace Arojan

Sofia Barroso

Johann Heinrich Bzida

Jesse Krinez Bzida

Melissa Black

Emilie Blazek

Benjamin Chu

Faith Mikaela Daniel

Deon Foy Sebastian Don

Daniella Fayad

Asta Ewing

Emilia Ewing

Mary Therese Grace Gilchrist

Grace Marie Hoskins

Isabella Rose Joyce Hugel

Jude Adam Hudson

Oliver Jakopovic

Nina Kancijanic

Catherine Kwa

Jessica Lim

Ian Mason

Teressa Nia

Olivia Pijaca

Erika Talbot

Elise Zara Sheedy

Charlie James Noonan

Ellia Cheyenne Miranda

Maria Nina Isabel Ompad

Maria Anne Margaret Ompad

Edward John Nhat Phong McCloskey

Amelia Therese Maya Sivasanmugam

Ethan Christopher Jai Sivasanmugam

Espérance Escandor Thompson



KEEP PRAYING!

Did you take home a prayer card, like this one earlier this year, committing to pray for the child named on the back of the card as he or she prepared to receive their First Eucharist?

In the Sunday Bulletin of the 19th June, Fr Robert Riedling urged the parish community to pray for all the children, that "they will continue to be nourished in their faith as they mature as Christian disciples, especially by prayer, scripture and the Body and Blood of the Lord." So let's keep praying!

We received Jesus for the first time on the Feast of Corpus Christi



*Children, Jesus comes to you
In Holy Communion
to feed you, love you
and fill you with His Grace.
May you always welcome
His Loving Presence*



What St Therese of Avila said:

*When you receive Holy Communion
close your bodily eyes so that you may
open the eyes of your soul.*

*Then look upon Jesus
in the centre of your heart*



These children show us

how to receive Jesus



*with
Joy*



*with
Love*



*with
Reverence*



*With
Awe*



Mementos a t t e r s



Each child who made their First Communion took away a precious gift, containing 3 items:

- ◆ My First Missal – Remembrance of First Holy Communion,
- ◆ A Rosary to encourage praying to Our Lady,
- ◆ A picture frame inscribed *My First Communion*. May God bless you on your First Communion Day. May the happiness of this celebration continue as you begin a new life in Christ.



And undoubtedly no child will forget the cutting and sharing of the scrumptious celebratory cake!

FR ROBERT SAYS “THANK YOU”

The weekend following the celebration of First Eucharist on 19th June, at the 9:30am Mass, Father Robert posted this note of thanks in the parish bulletin.

Many thanks to all those who helped make last weekend's First Holy Communion Mass so successful.

Thanks to Meg Gale who laid the foundations with her years of work as Sacramental Co-ordinator. Thanks also to Deacon Matthew who took up a leadership role on Meg's departure, and to Kerry Giumelli and Franca Bonserio whose expertise was invaluable. The parish staff, Pat, Donna and Mili deserve thanks too, especially on the administration and organising side of things as does Fr Chris for his dedication to the children.

Thank you all! Fr Robert

Sharing Matters

Bernadette Fabri, Principal of St Patrick's Primary, in the newsletter for week 8, writes about her First Communion and the importance of the Eucharist, vital as spiritual nourishment sustaining Catholic families to live as authentic 'Jesus people'.



Dear Parents and Caregivers

This Saturday and Sunday, children from our school will receive the Sacrament of Eucharist for the first time — their First Holy Communion. This will take place at Our Lady of Lebanon Co Cathedral on Saturday, and St Patrick's Cathedral at Parramatta on Sunday.

One thing I remember as a child at my First Holy Communion was the anticipation that soon I would receive Jesus in the form of a host. I remember with great clarity the excitement of this and of course in being able to wear the pretty new white dress my mother had bought for me. In those days we did not have individual parties for communion but a communion breakfast in the parish hall. I do recall my mother had booked a photographer to take a picture of me to add to the already hung photos of my older sister at her communion. What this said to me was that the family valued this day more than any other occasion up to that date. Receiving the sacrament of First Eucharist was an important part of our Catholic upbringing.

The sense of awe that we have when we are young, with an unfailing faith, is something people can sometimes lose when we get older. Unlike children, adults begin to make other aspects of their lives more important and we often get caught up with the busyness of life, neglecting our spiritual wellbeing. I once heard a priest challenge the congregation by asking, “Do you really believe that Christ is present in the Eucharist? If people truly believed, then it is surprising that people do not attend mass every day of the year.” Receiving Christ in the Eucharist unites us as a community and reminds us that we have a job to do and that is to be ‘Jesus people’; people that stand for forgiveness, hope, love and compassion in our communities.

We need this nourishment to assist us to continue to build the kingdom of God, in our own ways, in our own families and places of work, day after day. We need to support the vulnerable and work towards achieving justice. Receiving the Eucharist helps to remind us that this is what Christ did and modelled for each and every one of us. What we have been reminded of over the last couple of Sundays is that we do not have to do this alone but have the support and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Can I ask you all to keep in your prayers all the children who will make their First Holy Communion, this weekend, and to pray that their families will continue to guide them to have a faith that is resilient; inspired by our Catholic tradition and rich in hope and compassion. May God continue to bless you in your role as parents and caregivers and continue to grant you wisdom and grace.

*God bless you and your families,
Bernadette Fabri, Principal*



Editor: We appreciate Ms Fabri sharing this beautiful photo taken on the day she received Holy Communion for the first time.

This is the 3rd part of Fr Robert's journey to the Priesthood. It all stemmed from writing — in edition 109 — about family Christmas celebrations in a home with no explicit religious activity. This peaked readers' curiosity as to how he ended up a priest especially when he wasn't a 'Cradle Catholic'.



Encouraged by people's interest, in edition 110 Fr Robert wrote about his experience of Scripture lessons at state schools, and at university being put off by 'religious groups seemingly interested only in proselyting'; to an epiphany moment described as "God reaching out to me despite my lack of interest in Him"; which led him to seek a Christian community in which to live out a meaningful and loving relationship with God.

In Issue 111 he got cold feet about being baptised an Anglican, 'deciding it wise to investigate other Christian denominations before taking such a big step in my faith life.' This he did over the years. Then, despite warnings to stay away from the Catholic Church, a series of brochures 'What Do Catholics Believe?' was about to lead to the opposite eventuating. And now read on.....

I left off my vocation story in the last edition of St Pat's Matters by outlining my initial steps to the Catholic faith via a series of brochures that were sent to me outlining the basic beliefs of the Catholic Church. I ended that part of the story by mentioning that I felt compelled to look more seriously at becoming a Catholic but that I wasn't going to dive into this without some serious thought and reflection.

And so saying I approached St Patrick's Parish in Blacktown and enquired about the process for becoming a baptised Catholic. I was told about the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and decided to come along to learn more, understanding that there was no obligation on my part to complete the process. What I found there was a group of very dedicated volunteers, freely giving up their time each week to witness to their faith in order to assist me and others who were seeking to learn more — not just about the Catholic Church, its beliefs and culture, — but also to develop and nurture faith in God.

What I enjoyed about the RCIA process most was that I never felt any pressure to "join up". The team that led the sessions each week was made up of regular parishioners and a religious sister and brother. They were very genuine people who were always ready to answer questions and who never failed to be encouraging, even after I entered the Church.

Whilst I was undertaking the RCIA process I was regularly attending Mass and so gradually drifted away from the Presbyterian Church I had been attending at Doonside. Over time I became comfortable with the ritual of the Mass and developed a love for the liturgy, enjoying the balance between the Liturgy of the Word — emphasised above all else at the Presbyterian Church — and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, something that I was not yet able to receive.

I really had no doubts during the RCIA process that the Catholic Church was to be my faith home from now on. As time went on, I looked forward more and more avidly to being baptised and becoming a Catholic and this happened at the Easter Vigil Mass at St Patrick's, Blacktown, on 29 March 1997. I remember feeling a great sense of elation at the end

of the Mass after having received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, all within about half an hour or so. As I left the church that evening I felt such gratitude that I could now say "I am a Catholic", a member of a universal family of fellow believers.

So enthusiastic was I about now being a Catholic that I attended the early Mass the next day, Easter Sunday. I recall how terrific it felt that I was able to join the queue for Communion like everyone else, something that I had only been able to watch with a certain amount of frustration for many months!

And so I became a regular Mass-goer and a part of the community at St Patrick's, Blacktown, and got to know quite a few people at the parish, including the recently appointed Parish Priest, Fr Arthur Bridge, who had baptised and confirmed me. All was good as far as my faith life was concerned.

But there was a little, or maybe not so little something, niggling at the back of my mind...

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a great sense of elation at the end of the Mass
after having received the Sacraments of
Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist...
As I left the church that evening
I felt such gratitude that I could now say
"I am a Catholic", a member of
a universal family of fellow believers.*

EDITOR'S HOPES DASHED

When I asked Fr Robert if he had photos of his initiation into the Catholic Church that could be included in his article, he regretted he could not oblige the request as none were taken.

Back in 1997 taking photos during liturgies was still a rare event.

Looking Back Matters: What a blessing! Along with the seminarians Fr John Boyle recently took on tour, we too get to become acquainted with Parramatta's Catholic history through this article that he agreed to have published in *St Pat's Matters*. After all, he was Parish Priest and Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, 1991-2000.

A PILGRIMAGE TO CATHOLIC PARRAMATTA

In February, seventeen seminarians from the Holy Spirit Seminary, Harris Park, all of whom are students for the Diocese of Parramatta, went on an immersion experience, becoming acquainted with some of Parramatta's historical sites. They were accompanied by the new Rector of the Harris Park seminary, Very Reverend Paul Marshall, and the new Vice-Rector, Reverend Dr John Frauenfelder.



The Pilgrim Group at ComBank Stadium

While Parramatta is described as the Cradle of the Nation, it is also the cradle of Catholicism.

Parramatta claims the oldest convent in Australia, the oldest mortuary chapel, the oldest Catholic cemetery. In Parramatta's parish church the first profession of a religious took place. The present St Joseph's Hospital, Auburn, began on the site opposite the present cathedral. The façade of St Patrick's Orphanage, 500 metres from the cathedral and administered by the Good Samaritan Sisters beginning in 1859, has recently been cleaned and will be repurposed. Next door is the old Female Factory



where, from 1840, the Sisters of Charity worked, teaching needlework and sewing, giving some dignity to the women in what was a wretched and godforsaken institution.

It was in the bell tower of St Pat's Cathedral, looking at the newly installed ring of bells, that the seminarians heard the oft-repeated story that the original St Patrick's bells were on the *Dunbar*, which sank while attempting to enter Port Jackson on a dark and

stormy night in August 1857. So powerful was this legend in the oral history of Parramatta parishioners that the ninth Parish Priest of Parramatta, Monsignor Joseph McGovern, paid divers to look for the bells when the *Dunbar* wreck was "rediscovered" by SCUBA divers in the 1950s. Alas, the legend was disproved when the manifest of the ship's cargo was produced and nothing resembling a ring of bells appeared anywhere. It is a good story and sits alongside the belief that the first Mass celebrated in Parramatta was celebrated in the loft of the gaol in Hangman's Green opposite the present cathedral. This error is repeated in the St Patrick's Parramatta Centenary Magazine, May 1936. (The gaol had been burnt to the ground by persons unknown at the time Father James Dixon said the first Mass in Parramatta in 1803.) To misquote Galadriel in *The Lord of the Rings*, "History becomes legend and legend becomes myth." Such legends, however, make telling-the-story interesting!

For the purposes of a pilgrimage to the Parramatta Catholic historical sites, the concept of the magic lantern slide was used. This was a technology fashionable for education and entertainment in the 19th Century but has now morphed into the ubiquitous PowerPoint presentation. The slideshow was downloaded onto the seminarians' iPhones, so while in St John's Anglican Cathedral in Church Street, they could view a downloaded photo of the building in 1803. They also accessed photos of the fire that destroyed St Patrick's Cathedral on the afternoon of Monday February 19, 1996, even one of the police interviewing the arsonist.

The seminarians climbed up Rose Hill to Old Government House in Parramatta Park. Here Governor King summoned the



Catholics in the colony to hear the proclamation that their prayers for a priest had been answered, and that Father James Dixon, a convict priest, would be granted permission to officially celebrate Mass in May 1803. **This site is of historical importance for Catholics because that muster of Roman Catholics, ordered by Governor King, was fulfillment of the wishes of the five Parramatta Catholics, who had petitioned Phillip for a priest way back in 1792.**

That document, given to Phillip ten days before he left for England, informs the Governor of "the inconvenience we find in not being indulged with a pastor of our own religion." It shows that these Catholics were determined to hold on to their religion. "Our present opinion is that nothing could induce us ever to depart from the colony here, unless the idea of going into eternity without the assistance of a Catholic priest." Four of the petitioners were men. The fifth was a woman, Mary Macdonald. It was dated, Parramatta, November 30, 1792. *cont'd next page* ➔

Pilgrimage to Catholic Parramatta continued

Like all the historical buildings in Parramatta, the present Old Government House was closed because of COVID-19, but a guide came in to lead the students on a tour of Governor Lachlan Macquarie's house,.....

Macquarie, who came to the colony in 1810, was not a particularly religious man, but he had a Catholic view of redemption. He believed that once convicts had served their time, they were truly free. Their sin was expunged, and they could re-join society with their past crimes erased. This was the understanding of the layman, Macquarie, but it was not the view of the professional religious man, chaplain and magistrate, Reverend Samuel Marsden, who had been working in the colony some 14 years before Macquarie arrived. It was said of Marsden that *"he came to the colony to do good and did very well"*.

In 1795, Governor John Hunter made the Church of England chaplains magistrates. Marsden's role as magistrate at Parramatta attracted criticism amongst his contemporaries because he inflicted harsh punishments on convicts. It was compulsory for Catholics to attend Protestant services. Punishments were directed against the absentees, such as a reduction in the food ration or floggings in the later years. History has remembered Marsden as the 'Flogging Parson'. He wrote that Catholics *"were composed of the lowest class of the Irish nation; who are the most wild, ignorant and savage race that were ever favoured with the light of civilization; men that have been familiar with ... every horrid crime from their infancy. Their minds being destitute of every principle of religion and morality render them capable of perpetrating the most nefarious acts in cool blood. As they never appear to reflect upon consequences; but to be ... always alive to rebellion and mischief, they are very dangerous members of society. No confidence whatever can be placed in them... [If Catholicism in Australia] were tolerated they would assemble together from every quarter, not so much from a desire of celebrating Mass, as to recite the miseries and injustice of their banishment, the hardships they suffer, and to enflame one another's minds with some wild scheme of revenge"* [Samuel Marsden, *A Few Observations on the Toleration of the Catholic Religion in New South Wales*, memorandum, cited in Hughes, p. 188.]

Reading this today would incline us to think that Marsden was not a big fan of ecumenism. He certainly put himself in a conflict-of-interest situation when pronouncing sentence on Catholics who refused to attend his Protestant services. It is an irony that *Mamre*, Marsden's country estate (see *Genesis 13:18*), has recently passed from the hands of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy to Catholic Care Parramatta. Marsden would wince if he knew of this turn of events. It could be apocryphal, but people have said that they have heard noises coming from Section One, Row U, Plot 3, St John's Cemetery, Parramatta. Could it be that Samuel Marsden is turning in his grave?

After a tour of the new Parramatta stadium, the seminarians had a lunch break at the Parramatta Leagues Club. Here was more Catholic history. The Leagues Club is on the present site in O'Connell Street because of a decision taken by the local parish priest in 1958.

It came to pass that an innocuous advertisement was placed by the secretary of the Parramatta Leagues Club, Jack Argent, in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 11 February 1958. It announced that the new club was applying for a liquor licence for premises 4-

6 Ross Street, Parramatta. Now, 4-6 Ross Street just happens to be opposite the prestigious Our Lady of Mercy College (OLMC) and over the road from St Patrick's Primary School, a successor of Father Therry's little school begun in 1820 in Hunter Street, Parramatta.

The Parish Priest, Monsignor Joseph McGovern, sprang into action. He, with Mother Mary Thecla, Mother General of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, hired a barrister, Mr Bowie, to object to the club's application for a liquor licence.

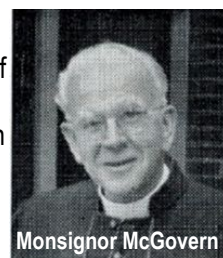


Fr Therry 1790-1864

The Metropolitan Licencing Court met on St Patrick's Day and again on the Feast of the Annunciation, at 42 Bridge Street, Sydney. Arguments against the proposed licence included children being run over by inebriated persons as they left the licensed premises, and the fact that patrons would be able to look over the convent wall and into the dormitories of OLMC. On the second day of the hearing continuous rosaries were prayed in the classrooms of St Patrick's Primary, OLMC and Marist Brothers' Parramatta. With Our Lady on side, it was inevitable that the Catholics would win. The decision, in favour of the parishioners, was handed down by Licensing Magistrate E J Forrest on the Friday of Easter Week, 1958. The City Engineer, Mr F C Smale, killed off the Ross Street project, recommending that Council reject the proposed development application because, as the *Cumberland Argus* headlined, **'Club's additions clash with religious area'**.

This decision meant that the club needed to look for a new location. In October that same year the Secretary of Parramatta Leagues Club Limited, put a second notice in the *Sydney Morning Herald* advertising that he was applying for a liquor licence for premises *"situate at 15 O'Connell Street, Parramatta"*. This is where the club now stands at the corner of Eels Place and O'Connell Street, next door to the new stadium. This was truly a win-win situation for both the parish and the club.

Nevertheless, the rumour went around the parish that for the cost and inconvenience of the court action, Monsignor McGovern, although winning the case, had put a hex on the Parramatta Eels, the team that joined the NRL 75 years ago this year, with the effect they would never win a premiership.



Parishioners thought that the curse had worn off in 1976 when Parramatta reached the grand final for the first time. But the Blue and Golds were unsuccessful. Parramatta made it again to the grand final the following season. This match against St George was a draw. A grand final replay was played the following week. Parramatta lost 22 to nil. Obviously, McGovern's Curse had not been lifted!

In May 1981, Mehmet Ali Agca shot Pope John Paul II in St Peter's Square. From Rome's Gemelli hospital, where the Pope was recovering, word spread that Papa Wojtyla had forgiven the would-be assassin. With forgiveness the new buzzword of 1981, and Monsignor McGovern dead for 17 years, (died 1961), the Eels supporters at St Patrick's Parish felt that the jinx should be lifted. In late September Parramatta won against Newtown, the team they had first played against in 1947. Parramatta had won their first premiership. The football gods were appeased. As a token of appreciation fans burnt down Cumberland Oval!

➔ to page 8

Still looking back from previous page

This was the end of an era. The fire that destroyed the oval was a purifying experience and conclusive proof that the curse had died, or was at least dormant.

McGovern's Curse is a case where myth has become legend and legend has become history. In the telling of the story it might be prudent to remember the adage, *"never let the truth get in the way of a good story"*.

The Chinese may be celebrating the Year of the Tiger, but the Parramatta supporters are convinced 2022, the 75th anniversary of Parramatta joining the NSWRL premiership, is the Year of the Eels.

LOOKING at FR JOHN BOYLE: or should we say Monsignor the title conferred on him circa 2017.

Fr John, a Parramatta Boy, raised and schooled in Parramatta (attending St Patrick's Primary, then Parramatta Marist Brothers till 1962), was the Cathedral Dean that terrible day in February 1996, when an arsonist set fire to St Patrick's.

For the benefit of newer parishioners we asked former parishioner Ross McNally, (now long time resident in Queensland), to revisit the dramatic moments he and Fr John first saw the 'inferno' engulfing our beloved place of worship. *"I vividly recall that eventful day when the Cathedral burnt down. I was doing the banking as usual on the Monday afternoon after the weekend masses. I was driving back from the Commonwealth Bank on Church Street, when I saw Fr John Boyle, stopped and offered him a lift. As we drew closer to the church we noticed smoke billowing out of the Belfry, John jumped out of the car and ran in trying to save his beloved church. The Fire Brigade were already there with the Cherry Picker attempting to extinguish the blaze."*

Maybe Fr John could be persuaded to share the gamut of emotions experienced as that unexpected catastrophe evolved. Via *St Pat's Matters*, of course. Keep a look-out!

COURTESY OF PARISHIONER FRANK DUFF



Fr John's decades of service included 30 years as an RAAF chaplain and work with hospital and prison chaplaincies. He was a key presence at RSL events, reunions, commemorations, and funerals. He spoke at the Anzac Day 2017 ceremony at the Parramatta War Memorial, the very day he departed for Rome to take up his appointment as Rector of Domus Australia.

DID YOU KNOW?



The naming of Marist Place by Parramatta City Council in 1965 was in tribute to the presence of the Marist Brothers here and the founding of their school in 1875.

Just recently Fr Robert located the plaque's position and took this shot to share with Phil Slattery – see his article about the Marists on page 9. ➔

Don't know where the plaque is laid? Well go on a Treasure Hunt. Hint: somewhere near the Presbytery.

Also, did you know that the Presbytery was originally the monastery where the Marist Brothers lived! Check out the marble foundation stone at the front of the building. That's because the Marists' School (now demolished) was beside the church, facing onto Victoria Road. ➔ see pictures page 9



Fr John with me (Frank Duff) at Club Parramatta for a Parramatta Returned Services League Sub-Branch meeting in February 2021.

Following his return from Rome, Fr John discovered, that despite his years of absence, he was still on-staff as a Chaplain to the Sub-Branch, a testimony to his past assistance to veterans.

The Marist Legacy Matters: 150 years of Marist Education in Australia

A local celebration for the Sesquicentenary, (1872-2022), of Marist presence in Sydney took place on Saturday, 18th June, at the home of Phil Slattery. A group of Marist Brothers and ex Marists gathered to remember and celebrate this very important occasion. Bishop Vincent was also in attendance. Phil thought it appropriate to even have a cake especially made.

Phil writes:

It was a night of remembering and recalling the work and charism of St Marcellin Champagnat the Founder of the Marist Brothers.



Blue ribbons from St Marcellin link the crib, the cross and the altar

The altar I set up in tribute to him recalls his belief, that the place of the brothers should be at the crib, the cross and the altar, and was the basis of his spirituality.

There was a short prayer service followed by a buffet meal. The toast was given by Br Alexis Turton, a previous Provincial of the Brothers in the Sydney Province.

Bishop Vincent cut the celebratory cake then said a few words about his relationship with the Marist Brothers. *"I believe that we have a lot in common – me as a Franciscan and you as Marists. We both believe in a sense of equality and fraternity. We are called to be the leaven of society."*

Each of those present were asked to recall the names of two Marist Brothers who had special significance for them either as students or as fellow Marists. During the night there were many wonderful stories recalled of previous life experiences of both living and working as Brothers.

Our celebration concluded with the singing of *"Sub Tuum Presidium"* ("We Fly to your Patronage" – a well-known and prayed Marist prayer to Our Lady.)



The Marist Gathering, with host Phil at front right

WHO REMEMBERS?.....

when the Marist Brothers School stood next to St Patrick's Church? It's just visible in the top photo. Notice the boys crossing the street, probably after school. Not much traffic back then.



Below is a view of the school from Victoria Road towards the church. The building is long gone, because the new Cathedral now occupies that space.



But wait! More will be revealed in the next edition!

- ◆ a profile of St Marcellin Champagnat, the Marists' founder.
- ◆ and tracing how the Marists came to Australia's shores and unfolding their significant legacy of a whole network of schools.



Bishop Vincent enjoying conversation over a glass of wine with the Marists ↑ before performing the very important task—cutting of the celebratory cake.

Editor's Note:

When I pressed Phil to tell me the names of the two Marists who had special significance for him, without hesitation, he replied:
"Br Fergus my novice master 55 years ago and Br Bryan, a good friend."

Pentecost Retreat



Marietta & Michael Giullemma, keen advocates for organising Faith Formation sessions coordinated this retreat.



Fr Robert Riedling and Annette Hartman were the guest speakers.

June 4th saw approximately 30 people — parishioners and visitors from nearby parishes, — gather in the cathedral hall keen to listen to guest speakers

Parishioners Claire Pospischil and Diane Smith kindly agreed to write about their experience at the retreat.



Unfortunately when people gathered for this photo, at least 10 of the participants had left.



To celebrate the arrival of the Holy Spirit sent to us by the Father at Pentecost to help strengthen and guide His newfound Church, St Pat's laity were invited to come together to prepare our hearts and minds for celebrating the Feast of Pentecost the following day.

So on June 4th, a crisp Saturday morning the two dozen early arrivals wrapped their hands around hot cuppas as they stood in the warmth of the morning sun, chatting quietly and becoming acquainted, me included, while others chose to reflect in solitude, with Gregorian music playing softly in the background.

The retreat began at 10am with a warm welcome, hymns and prayers.

Fr Robert's topic was *The Holy Spirit and the Future of the Church*. He began by taking us back in time to the foot of the Cross — the day the Church was born. He highlighted that the Church was born by the side of the crucified Christ; from Jesus' pierced side flowed blood and water —essentially the Eucharist and Baptism. — as Jesus said at the Last Supper, "This is my Body...this is my blood which is poured out for you."

He went on to say that Pentecost is sometimes referred to as 'The birth of the Church' and that the Holy Spirit was crucial in establishing the Church, empowering the Apostles to go forth in mission. (Fr Robert's reflection in the Parish Bulletin 5th June, 2022 covered what was presented in his talk.) His morning session concluded with time for Q&A, before we enjoyed a free lunch, courtesy of the parish.

Afternoon prayer began the second session. Then, Annette Hartman, like Fr Robert, made use of a power point presentation, introducing her topic, *The Pentecost Gospel according to St John*, in particular Chapter 14: 15-16;23-26, where Jesus promised another Helper/Advocate and that if we love Him we will keep His commandments. And in V 26 that the Father will send the Holy Spirit in Jesus' name, to teach us all things and remind us of all that Jesus has said to us.

Annette shared her wisdom, focussing on the Triune God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit and their specific roles. She spoke of the love of God for all mankind and the importance of the Church's mission to extend that love to all humanity. pointing out, "It is God's love that makes it possible for us to be channels of His Love to others and to direct others to enjoy the intimate love of Jesus." and "to refuse to love is to refuse the life that Jesus is offering". She also spoke of the body of Christ and of our bodies being temples of God and to aim to be holy with that in mind as we ask the Holy Spirit to help us to walk worthy of our calling, in love.

Annette's knowledge of bible and church history was impressive as was her professional presentation. Both Fr Robert's and Annette's sessions were informative and thought-provoking. Some of my mindsets were challenged! I like being challenged! I also met new people, with depth of insight, much wisdom and full of personality.

I encourage parishioners to attend any future faith formation offered by the parish.

From Diane



For me, this was the first spiritual retreat I think I have been to since high school, nearly thirty years ago. I enjoyed the opportunity of a short 'time out' from day to day life and the space to convene with others ready to participate in a deep dive session on the work and manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

I was able to attend for the first half of the retreat, which involved listening to reflective music, singing a hymn, plus readings from the terce and sext monastic timetable for the day (yes, these terms are for real!).

Using visual power points, Fr Robert presented a great session on the Holy Spirit, covering history in the church and, most importantly, a discussion on the impact the Holy Spirit has and the role it can play in the current Church. Regrettably I was unable to stay for Annette's afternoon reflection session and am keen to hear her speak at a future event.

We are fortunate as a parish community to have a regular retreat program, with both laity and clergy willing and able to run such reflections. For those of you who have never attended a retreat before, or like me, in a long time, I encourage you to seize the opportunity to attend a retreat when one is on offer. Take some time out to listen, reflect and potentially respond with what you encounter.

From Claire



Fr Robert's Bulletin report on the Corpus Christi Procession

We had a terrific evening last Thursday with the Corpus Christi procession, beginning with Mass here, at St Pat's Cathedral, a procession with the Blessed Sacrament to Our Lady of Lebanon (OLL) at Harris Park, Adoration and concluding with a Mass in the Maronite Rite at 10:00pm. I do hope that this will mark the beginning of a closer relationship with our brothers and sisters at Our Lady of Lebanon, many of whom frequent St Patrick's anyway! Many thanks to Dean Fr Tony Sarkis and the clergy and parishioners for their hospitality. We look forward to the next event!

Michael and Marietta Guillema comment:

As long-time parishioners, when this feast event between St Patrick's Cathedral and Our Lady of Lebanon Church was announced in our bulletin, we took the opportunity to attend this unique Corpus Christi celebration.

The experience of attending both the Roman rites and Maronite rites in one event was very fulfilling for us. Being in the Procession itself was a great privilege giving us the opportunity to publicly express our faith with fellow Catholics through prayer and songs while walking in the cold early evening.

We hope that this becomes an annual event and that more St Pat's parishioners will join in to celebrate and witness to this important feast in the public domain.

Bee Teh comments:

Seeing the notice in the Parish Bulletin about the Corpus Christi Procession brought to mind back home in Malaysia the annual street procession, as an act of faith.

The candle lit procession was led by the Maronite Dean Fr Tony Sarkis carrying the Blessed Sacrament with his team including Fr Robert, Fr Chris and Deacon Matthew.

The prayerful procession meandered along the Parramatta River bank to Our Lady Of Lebanon, Harris Park. Along the way we stopped to pray and sang hymns in English and Arabic.

I felt the communal contemplation deeply and was drawn to the Real Presence throughout the walk. Throughout the evening walkers stopped in their track to observe in silence the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, Christ walking among us.

MINISTRY MATTERS: SERVING GOD & COMMUNITY

Walk with Mindy Mercado as she shares some memories of that journey.

Thank you, Marian for giving me the opportunity to reflect and share what has been for me, a very fruitful ministry at St Pat's. Writing this article has given me the opportunity to realise how much the time has flown (to my surprise, almost 20 years) and to remember the people who have been part of the journey and who have taught, inspired and deepened my faith and love for our parish community along the way.

My interest in becoming an altar server first came about when Fr Warren Edwards (who was still a seminarian then) was recruiting for new altar servers (around 2001 – 2002). My younger sister, Jesusa and myself were keen to join as it would be something which would allow us to be more involved during Sunday Mass. Due to a clash between altar server training and my netball games, I was unable to join this first recruitment and thus Jesusa began her journey as an altar server alone. She used to tell me about the things she learned during her training and the proper names of the different items and holy vessels used. I still remember the training material she would show me – a double sided A4 page which had the images and labels of each item and very thorough instructions on how to fold a Corporal – The square linen cloth on top of which the bread and wine are placed during the Eucharist. Her sharing of what she had learned inspired me even more to want to join.

Almost a year later, when there was another recruitment drive I joined. By this time, the construction of the new cathedral was underway so the parish community moved onto the Cumberland Hospital site in Fleet Street. I was trained by John Watkins and another seminarian. I became a regular server at Sunday 6pm Mass along with Jesusa, and Keifer (often mistaken as our brother) and along with Vince Condon and Michael Hanratty, acolytes of long-standing at the time. Michael titled our trio as the, "A-Team." I never really knew the true significance and importance of what I was doing. Being a shy 13-year old, I enjoyed serving as I was able to do something, "different" during Mass. I got to know the parishioners who regularly attended and also enjoyed meeting other youth.

When the new Cathedral was completed, Jesusa and I were invited to be servers at the Dedication of the Cathedral on 29th November 2003 – the celebration in which the church building is consecrated to become a church. Being the smallest and youngest at the time, we were tasked as the "vimpas" or vimpa-bearers. The *vimpa* is the cape-like shawl worn by the server to hold the celebrating Bishop's Mitre (head dress) and Crozier (staff). I still remember my sister constantly reminding me in the lead up, *"You can't hold the Mitre with your hands, your hands must always be covered like gloves with the vimpa."* I took note and was determined to do my job as told. When we arrived on the day, Bishops from all over Australia had assembled. I had never seen so many Bishops in my life – to which my cheeky sister said, *"You have to hold ALL OF THEIR MITRES!"* The stress on my face said it all until Fr. Peter Williams (who was the Master of Ceremonies) confirmed that it was only Cardinal Edward Cassidy's I had to hold – such a relief! My memories of the day and weekend are quite a blur as there was so much going on. I remember serving at four masses over that weekend and was at the Church more than I would have been over the Easter Triduum. There was a feeling of excitement and anticipation with the new Cathedral

being finally built. I can still recall the strong smell of the Tasmanian Oak and seeing the stark contrast of the stone altar for the first time. Seeing all the people, politicians, special guests, the extra parts of the liturgy and media coverage, this was the first time I felt and knew that my role as an altar server at the Cathedral was a privilege and something truly special.

Straight after the Dedication, many special Masses and celebrations were held at the Cathedral. A core group of servers, under the guidance of Fr. Peter Williams were tasked at assisting at these Masses. I learned much about the different liturgical celebrations and my love for the Mass grew.

Going to the 6pm Mass became so routine that my mother, Cora was encouraged to become an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist. Sunday evenings consisted of serving at Mass and then attending youth group afterwards. Over the years, servers had come and gone, and it was a trend to cease serving once you finished high school. However, because of the enjoyment of serving with our new friends, our core group continued serving beyond high school – me, Jesusa, Eleanora, Keifer and Andrew. As we became older, the male servers were often encouraged to become acolytes and female servers to become senior servers. Encouraged by Sr. Susan Ward, who was Pastoral Associate at the time, Jesusa and I enrolled in the senior server course at the Institute for Mission at Blacktown. This gave me a new sense of purpose in my role of service at the altar as it also allowed me to assist as an extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist – another privilege and way of drawing me closer to our Lord and deepening my faith.

When people say that Christmas is their favourite time of the year, I often disagree and share that Easter is my favourite. This

Jesusa (L) & I lighting the candles at the Easter Vigil during the Gloria



time of the year gives me a sense of renewal having made sacrifices during Lent, reflecting on the death of Jesus and coming together in celebration of the Resurrection. My favourite Mass has always been the Easter Vigil. I have very fond memories of serving at this Mass over the years. Some notable mentions are: learning how to quickly and reverently light everyone's candles during the Service of Light; the one year the Paschal candle blew out as too many of us were trying to take a light at the same time; taking turns ringing *Patrick* (large bell in the tower) during the *WHOLE Gloria* – and our attempts at how high we could "fly" as the heaviness of the bell swung the rope back up. ➔ to next page

I have always had a strong bond and love for our community of St Pat's and only upon reflecting on my years as an altar server, have I realised how instrumental this has been in my life and family's involvement in the parish: I would not have been as keen to join youth events had I not been serving at the Sunday 6pm Mass.

Large events such as the Dedication of the Cathedral opened up my heart to the beauty of the liturgy. Serving with others has created beautiful, lifelong friendships – our core group still continue to recall the memories we have shared serving together.

Everyone has a role and can be involved in a variety of ways in sharing their time and gifts – within the Mass itself as a reader, musician, bell-ringer or before and after mass - set up and preparation e.g. flowers and pack up, serving at morning teas and suppers.

Over the last couple of years my role in serving has changed. I now enjoy coming to the Sunday morning Masses. You can often see me serving at the 9:30am Mass or livestreaming at the 11am Mass. I thoroughly enjoy training the new servers and find it very humbling—knowing that I can pass on the same encouragement, knowledge and sense of community I had received from the different parishioners — fellow servers, acolytes, MCs, priests) over the years. Having a good grasp of the parts of the Mass now allows me to capture the various aspects of the liturgy when livestreaming to people at home joining in the Mass.

As a child, I thought serving at the altar would be something fun to do. As a teenager, I realised that the parish was a place and space where I belonged. As an adult, I realise the importance of community and continually exploring ways we can further enrich this experience. Had it not been for the encouragement and hospitality of those around me, I would not be where I am today – serving at the altar for over 20 years and hopefully, continuing to do so in the years ahead.

↓ Image of Easter Vigil: shows Archbishop Anthony Fisher (previous Bishop of Parramatta) blessing the water in the baptismal font, myself and Jesusa as candle bearers. At the front right in white and mauve is Fr Peter Williams with then Deacon Andrew directly behind assisting as MC. To the right is Fr Wim and Vince Condon - a regular 6pm mass acolyte who had trained us.



Matters behind the scenes:

**There are all sorts of service to be done,
but always to the same Lord.
1Cor 12:5**



In her article about ministry at St Patrick's, Mindy mentioned that since the onset of COVID her ministry has extended to service behind the scenes — operating the livestreaming of Masses, but now only happening at the 11am Sunday Mass and occasionally for special liturgies.

It just so happened that some months ago, Pat Preca, Parish Secretary caught Iris Falzon and Mili Lee in the act of serving behind the scenes, at the Easter Vigil.

So it's only fair to acknowledge another parishioner who has happily volunteered her time and talent to do likewise. Meet Charlene Valentin. People might recognize Charlene as a Reader at either 9:30 or 11am Sunday Mass.

So if you are an IT savvy person and a request for volunteers for Livestreaming is posted in the Sunday bulletin, put your hand up and give it a go!



St Pat's Seniors matter

*"...they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the Lord is upright"
Psalm 92:13-15*

SENIORS' LUNCH FRIDAY, 17TH JUNE

The Seniors who came

Margery & Greg Simpson
Marian & Baldo Polizzi
Valerie & Ian Gilbertson
Barry & Marie Wilson &
daughter Maryanne Wilson
Pamela & Raymond Love
Ursie & Bill Lelyveld
Elisabeth & Ross Clark
Martin & Philomena Dharamdas
Mely Aseoche
Nestor Montesco
Bob Edgar
Phil Russo
Marthe Nalletamby
Patti Murphy
Margaret Climpson
Barbara Hector
Felicitas Apparuthai
Bee Teh
Pamela Bain
Judith Dunn
Ian Goldthorpe
Leo Coleman
Gail Olivier
Phil Slattey
Bill Kendall
Priscilla Newman
Annette Hartman
PatTenido
Esther Lopez
Francisco Bernardo
Letty
Eileen McCudden
Len Cruz

This luncheon follows on from the Seniors Breakfast on St Patrick's Day, launching a ministry focusing on outreach to the senior parishioners of the Cathedral Parish.

Fr Chris del Rosario stood in to welcome everyone because Fr Robert had been held up hearing confessions at the Primary School. But he appeared later to render help where necessary.

The increase in attendees was a promising sight and afforded the opportunity for face-to-face catch up between friends who'd being isolated during COVID had been unable to attend Mass. There were even guests from further afield.

As at the Breakfast the seniors were treated to a fine repast, beginning with delicious pumpkin soup, followed by personally selecting mains and dessert from the buffet.

In addressing the attendees, Mili Lee reminded everyone about the survey form distributed at the Breakfast and encouraging anyone with suggestions for a suitable activity for the next meeting, to contact her at the office.

The person who made a cash donation for the launch of this ministry in March, did so again and the Parish Team gratefully acknowledges their generous support.

It was a real treat to have parishioner Judith Dunn, historian extraordinaire present at the luncheon. She is a regular contributor of articles for St Pat's Matters. Ever obliging, when Mili asked if she would be a guest speaker at the luncheon, without hesitation, Judith said yes. So sandwiched between courses her talk took listeners back to the early days of Parramatta.



When asked for a brief summary of her talk for this article, she explained via email, *"I didn't write down what I said for the luncheon, so have re-created what I think was the flavour of the talk. Please shorten [the attachment] if needed.....The few lines you wanted grew like Topsy!"*

Well, Judith's prodigious knowledge of Parramatta as the Cradle of Faith is considered too valuable to cut. So her article appears on the adjacent page for readers enlightenment.



◀ The Parish Team i.e. Fr Robert and Fr Chris, Mili, Pat and Donna were grateful for Maryanne Wilson pitching in to help, even though she was a guest!



Thanks to JUDITH DUNN, readers are gaining valuable insights into Parramatta, Cradle of Faith and learning about our Catholic forebears' perseverance to keep that Faith against all odds.

PARRAMATTA – CRADLE OF FAITH

Judith Dunn

The first mention of Catholicism in this country is when a petition was presented to Governor Arthur Phillip at Government House, Parramatta in 1792. In part the petition said, *"We the undersigned with the utmost humble respect, take the liberty of representing to your Excellency the inconvenience we find in not being indulged heretofore with a pastor of our religion."*

This was signed by three emancipists, a sailor, a farmer and a settler's wife. Their heartfelt plea fell on deaf ears despite many convicts being Catholic. A convict priest, Father Harold, lived in a cottage in Parramatta but was not officially sanctioned to take up his office as a minister. Although not authorised by the colonial government, the Catholic faith was kept alive furtively in private homes. At last in 1803, Catholics were permitted to attend mass and Father Dixon, another convict priest, was officially given approval to conduct mass on a three-week rotation between Sydney, Parramatta and Windsor. The first officially recorded mass in Australia of which there is a definite record was on Gaol Green (now Prince Alfred Square opposite the Cathedral) on 22 May of that year. Although there are many references to mass being said in the upper room of the gaol, the first mass must have been in the open, as the upper floor of the gaol was not completed until 1804.

In March 1804, convicts from the Government Farm at Castle Hill broke out in an uprising against the colonial government. As many were Irish Catholics, it was suspected Father Dixon may have had a hand in the uprising, so just 10 months after being allowed to celebrate mass, this right was taken away and Father Dixon was stripped of his stipend for 12 years. People of different denominations came together and supported him and once more the faith was kept alive in private homes.

In 1817 Father O'Flynn visited Parramatta but was deported the following year as he had arrived without official papers. At last in 1820, Father John Joseph Therry and Father Connolly began to visit Parramatta regularly. In 1822 a grant was made for a Catholic Church at the sixteen mile stone from Sydney — Parramatta — and St Patrick's Cemetery was used for the first time. However the Surveyor General noted in a letter, *"the cemetery is much too valuable a site for Catholics, take it off them,"* which indicates they may have appropriated this land for themselves! As the grant was not ratified until Dean Coffey's time after 1852, there is some merit in this idea. This was the

first denominational cemetery, as St John's Cemetery was, at this time, a general cemetery. The mortuary chapel in the cemetery is the oldest in Australia dating from 1844. The first school also opened in 1822.

Father Therry was denied access to the upper room of the gaol to say mass so services were held at Mr Nash's (Woolpack Inn). Father Power was also in Parramatta during Father Therry's time.

In 1838 the Sisters of Charity were the first nuns ever to come to Australia. Four nuns and a novice were given a home by ex-convict William Davis, at St Mary's Convent, where the Mercy Convent is today. There they also built the first infectious diseases hospital in Australia, admitting people of all denominations. Imagine the trials of these educated ladies establishing themselves in a still rough, convict dominated society. Gaol Green (Prince Alfred Square) was the site of the first and second male gaols and first female gaol. The sights, sounds and smells of the whipping triangle and the gallows, also on this spot, must have been appalling and no place for quiet prayer. The sisters walked twice a day to the Female Factory (Convict Women's Gaol) to minister to convict women. The novice, Eliza Williams was professed as a Sister of Charity in April 1839, the first profession of a nun in Australia.

Dean Bede Sumner also laboured in the Parramatta district. He was the first priest ordained in Australia, as a Benedictine, and was chaplain and a great support to the Benedictine nuns at Subiaco where he was eventually buried.

How hard the labours of the priests must have been. As well as Parramatta to look after including attending those who were about to be hanged, they also had to minister to the churches at Concord and Kissing Point. When already an old man, Monsignor Rigney retired to St Brigid's, Prospect and ministered at St Lawrence O'Toole, Prospect Reservoir and St Patrick's, Blacktown, riding his beloved donkeys for transport.

How lucky we are today due to the exertions of these pioneers of our faith. We have priests and nuns who minister to our needs in myriad ways: we can attend church and receive the sacraments freely; have the comfort of our religion, the companionship, prayers and support, when needed, of other parishioners; we have friendship and a sense of belonging to our parish family. The church is not the buildings, attractive and solid as they are, the church is us, the people. Let us always remember these priests and nuns who paved the way under great trials and built the parish we have today.

POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER INTENTION FOR JULY

THE ELDERLY

***"We pray for the elderly,
who represent the roots and memory of a people;
may their experience and wisdom
help young people to look towards the future
with hope and responsibility***



Youth Matters

From the 18th-20th of March, Teen Credo, our youth group had the privilege to attend a retreat at Mount Carmel Retreat Centre. During this retreat, we heard testimonies and talks from many beautiful and inspirational individuals. But this wasn't the only thing that this retreat gave the youth group; we formed new relationships, and created stronger ones at that.

Being one of the eldest in Credo, I have seen many faces come and go before me in the group, and have witnessed and been a part of many friendships that are grounded in our Catholic faith. During this retreat I witnessed so many relationships emerge and strengthen within a measly three days. The retreat brought all of us closer in one way or another. It made us talk to people in the group that we don't usually talk to, and gave us the opportunity to be part of a collective experience that some might have not yet experienced. To see everyone sitting together, and sharing conversations, laughs, and meals was a very comforting and wholesome sight. A sight that made me appreciate this group of which I am a part.

One thing you should know about me is, I have a horrible memory. However, the one thing I distinctly remember from Deacon Matthew's talk that stuck with me — even till now — was his description of humility:

"Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less."

Pride is a sin that I'm sure every person struggles with, no matter what age or background, and humility is a value I try to continuously pray for, yet I've never really understood it. It was one of those things that I thought I knew what it meant, but if someone asked me to explain it to them, I wouldn't be able to do so. After Deacon Matt's talk to the whole group, we all went off into our small groups, where he was one of my leaders for the session. During our small group, we were asked if we wanted to share our thoughts and queries on the talk. I offered up mine, while making sure to ask Deacon to repeat his definition of humility so I could write it down. *"Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less."*

When I hear this, I just think, how beautiful are these words? But I also realised how easily you could slip between the two, thinking less of yourself rather than thinking of yourself less. One interesting thought I pondered was that even though this is not the way to go, wouldn't it be easier for those who do think less of

Stacie Touche, one of the oldest members of St Patrick's Credo Youth Group, when asked to write about going on retreat, immediately agreed to do so. We thank her for sharing that experience.



themselves to think of themselves less, and this made me wonder how many people must be stuck in this cycle, yet not know. But there is also a newfound beauty I now see in those who are humble, for they know their worth, yet they choose to put another before themselves; a trait I find most admirable.

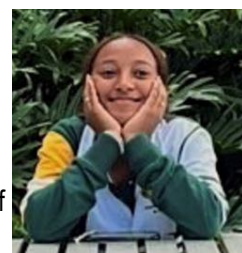
Our small groups took place after each testimony and talk. It was a time of reflection and questions, and an opportunity for noteworthy theological conversations to be had. The one thing I loved about our small groups was not only did we get advice and information from our leaders Deacon Matthew and Gen Lee, but we also gained insights from each other.

One other very simple, yet useful, piece of advice I received from this retreat was ***"Do your best and Jesus will do the rest"***. This was said by one of my friends during her reflection on the talk, advice I now like to carry around with me.

Through all these talks and testimonies I also learned things about myself. I learnt that I haven't been that present lately, in all aspects of my life, but especially my spiritual life. I had been so distracted and focused on all the assignments that were due at the time, all the school work and notes I had to catch up on, and so stressed from the infamous year 12 life, that all the worries and outcomes had started to bleed into other parts of my life. But just like most things, once you identify the problem, then you can start working on it and start to focus on it. And I did just that.

The Sunday we came back from the retreat, I was serving as I usually do at the 6pm Mass, but this Mass was different. I felt so present in the Mass, I could hear and understand every word that Father Chris and Deacon Matthew preached and prayed. After that Mass, I was grinning from ear to ear like a mad woman, because I just felt so genuinely happy. After all, for some time, I hadn't been as focused as I should have been in Mass, because I had only been thinking about what I needed to do next, or looking after the new children that started serving with me. But after what felt like forever, I was able to sit in Mass, whilst still serving, and just be *in* the Mass, be a part of the Mass, be *present* during Mass.

It was all thanks to the retreat that I was able to realise and witness all these things; see the younger kids open up more to each other, to realise what true humility looked like, and the importance of being truly present.



The 10th of June 2022 marked the 184th anniversary of the killing of 28 Aboriginal people at Myall Creek Station in what is now the Gwydir Shire. The massacre itself was quite unremarkable at the time. Indeed, it was just one of hundreds of such events that occurred throughout the colony and continued right up to the 1930s. It was business as usual, an imperative to eradicate the “black problem” which was seen as an impediment to the progress of agricultural of the colony.

Myall Creek stands out in history because it is the only one that culminated in the charging, trial, conviction and execution of the perpetrators. Because of this it was well documented and we are able to know and understand, as savage as it was, the motives and actions of those involved. Of course, the wealthy land owners (stealers) who sanctioned or even directed the murders were not implicated in any legal proceedings.

Fast forward to the present, we now have the opportunity to remember, to understand, to reconcile the painful birth of the nation that has given us so much but also deprived, denied and decimated a proud and ancient culture. However, even in our modern society there is turmoil and conflict when it comes to recognising the origin of our nation. In January 1965 Len Payne from Bingara proposed, among howls of derision, that a memorial be erected at the site. It was not until 1998 that a committee was formed to make it happen. Despite some opposition, including physical threats, the committee steadily generated enthusiasm in the indigenous and white communities. Gwydir Shire Council got on board and a permanent memorial was finally dedicated on the 10th of June 2000.

Phil Russo and myself were fortunate enough to make the 600km journey again this year. We weren't able to make it to the Saturday afternoon concert at the beautifully restored Roxy Theatre in Bingara but after a night out at Inverell we were able to take in the full programme on Sunday which was held at the Myall Creek Hall and the Massacre Memorial site just up the road.

At the amphitheatre we were treated to cultural dance presented by various local school groups, some dancers as young as four years old. This people who, in the past, have been forbidden to practice their culture or even speak their own language have a proud tradition of story telling. Their dance and song are the prime vehicles for passing on this culture and it is a profound joy to see this tradition being revived.



Gathered at the Memorial Rock just visible behind the trees.

The guest speaker was historian and author James Wilson-Miller who spoke passionately about the struggles at Myall Creek and many other encounters across the nation.

Following the speeches we took part in the walk to the Memorial Rock, very close to the site of the massacre. Before starting, we were invited to put ochre on our faces and take part in the smoking ceremony as a cleansing rite. Along the path are a number of plaques which set out the story of the Wirrayaraay people who occupied this land and lived in harmony here.



At each station a group of school students read the inscriptions for us. I should mention here that these students come each year from as far as Gold Coast, Canberra, Rose Bay as well as more local schools in Narrabri, Armidale, Tamworth, Wyallda, Inverell and Tingha. At the Memorial Rock the assembly sat in silence as the drone of the bullroar alerted the spirits to our presence.

Words were spoken by descendants of the victims and descendants of the perpetrators. Candles were lit by indigenous and non-indigenous students. Hugs all round signified reconciliation and a fierce desire to move forward together.



Bob Edgar (centre) who wrote this article, with a young teacher and his friend.

Getting to know parishioners matters

This initiative of Fr Robert's has recently been resurrected in the Sunday Bulletin. So it's planned to resume featuring a collation of these nutshell vignettes in *St Pat's Matters*.

Meet long time parishioner TERRY O'BRIEN



When two of our seven children have reached their sixtieth birthdays, it forces us 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 Road, 56 years of marriage, Ann and I

have literally been tied to the hip with St Pat's since moving the 800kms 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. This allowed us three overseas trips, one with four of our lifetime friends.

Then 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's Pilgrimage through Greece, Malta and Rome safely.

Within the Parish, my good friend Paul Mahoney (now sadly recently deceased.) 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 forty-fourth 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 twenty-seven 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.

Parish participation → about 9 years ago in the Diocesan Pastoral Planning session, sharing hopes for the future with Bishop Anthony



Editor's Note:

Many parishioners might be unaware of Terry's constant letter writing to the Catholic Weekly, among all his other social justice works. When they heard of his current health situation, still keeping him in hospital/rehab, they published his regular contributions and wished him a quick recovery.

Meet The Wilsons: Dr Barry and Marie



They joined St Patrick's Parish when they moved to Parramatta as a young family in 1966. Marie and Barry raised Michael, Andrew, Mary-Anne, Matthew, and Damien in the parish. They met new parish families as each child started school. Many of those families became their dearest friends, often chatting after Sunday Mass.

For years, Marie volunteered with fundraising for the church and schools. She also worked at Housie on Friday nights in the old church hall. Barry became a regular at the daily morning Mass when he retired from 'doctoring'. He was part of the 'Counters' team (counting the weekend donations) and was actively involved with the parish nursing homes.

Marie and Barry celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in 2020. Although friends and family were unable to share the occasion due to COVID-19, they were honoured that Fr Peter Williams joined them for prayers and a Papal Blessing. Marie and Barry are grateful for the visits from the parish clergy. When the rare opportunity arises, it is a joy to be amongst the congregation at St Patrick's Cathedral to pray together.

They feel truly blessed to have been a part of St Patrick's Parish community for so many years and hope to continue for many years to come.

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

We would like to get to know all parishioners of St Patrick's Cathedral Parish, whether you are a long-time parishioner, been here for a few years, or are relatively new to the parish. Feel free to share whatever you are comfortable with sharing about yourself and/or your family. You might include details, e.g., of how long you've lived in the parish, your occupation, details of spouse/partner and/or children, hobbies and interests, your faith story, your involvement with St Patrick's and what you like about the parish. The possibilities are endless! Please email your contribution (max 250 words) along with a jpeg photo of good resolution, to Pat Preca, Parish Secretary, secretary@stpatscathedral.com.au along with a phone number in case we need to clarify something. Looking forward to "Getting to know you"

The 'self care' movement, born of a marriage between the *wellness* wave and feminist independence, confuses me. As a modern mother, I'm told to look after everyone, with an insistence that I must also be sure to look after myself. Of course, I must also work as well in order to fund the supplements and tonics required to maintain an inner health which fortunately no one in this capitalist exchange can actually see.

Modern society has come to acknowledge that mothers need care, but we cannot actually make that anyone's concern, just add it to the list of things mothers need to do for themselves.

Of course your worth as a woman with children is assessed according to how childless you can appear at all times. You need to be fit, free and well-rested. The complete opposite of what motherhood makes you feel. Whilst effortlessly executing this illusion, you must also reassure society that although you take very good care of yourself, you're not in fact prioritising that care above that of your household and children. That would be selfish. So if you could please selflessly exercise self care, that would be great. ...Huh?!

Do you avoid selfishly focusing on personal growth or care? Well then you're just 'letting yourself go', which is irresponsible and selfish. A bad example for your children and a burden upon society. Luckily, Instagram has a potion for that. I'm sure there's a contouring trick you can use to give the illusion of cheek bones without having to manifest them in reality.

The commerce of self care is simply exploiting this quandary that mothers find themselves in every day. The juxtaposition of being a primary carer for others but also being your own sole carer is pure marketing genius. It keeps me in this mouse wheel while I serve my family and make them 'my world', but I must also look after myself lest I become weary from that mammoth responsibility of caring for others.

A responsibility that the entire world acknowledges is important yet is not willing to assign any commercial value. The best they can do for us is sell us more things to 'help' us take care of ourselves.

Now, let's consider this from a Christian lens. Humility is paramount and a self-righteous ego will ultimately lead to man's downfall. Instead, we must serve everyone selflessly without thinking about ourselves. OK, well that's one less thing I have to do for myself.

A society living within these precepts should, in principle, be fine. We'd all just be taking care of one another. But this falls over when it comes to mothers. They are expected to care unconditionally. But are we caring for them? Are we defending their interests? Protecting their dignity? Speaking up for their rights in the workplace? Preserving their safety? Not really. That's never been society's priority. And now that we understand that they need to be cared for, we're kindly requesting that they do that for themselves.

The average person makes 35,000 decisions a day. Some are mundane yet critical, like where to put down your car keys. Such a small and fleeting decision to which you don't pay any regard, and yet, if poorly considered, it could change the course of your entire day. Paying regard to the women in your life is just as small and fleeting a consideration. It's as simple as deciding to take on a domestic task without being asked. Or reaching out to help with a child. Or speaking up for them in a meeting. Of the 35,000 decisions you make today, choose one that helps a woman in your life.

Share your stories with us at

modernmarymums@gmail.com

Join the conversation about how on earth to survive the challenging vocation of motherhood as modern Christian women.



From Christopher Heffron

REFLECT:

When we're sad or lonely, who better to turn to than our universal mother? Mary can feel the ripples of pain in our hearts and is ready to guide us to her Son.

PRAY:

Dear Mary

Like a woeful child, I am in need of your motherly care.

Wrap your arms around me for comfort, dry my tears, take me by the hand, and lead me to your Son the source of all that is good.

For only he can cast out the shadows of my troubled heart. Amen.

ACT:

Not all of us are mothers, but we can still give maternal care to those who are hurting. Share this prayer with the people in your life who could use a word of encouragement.



Our Knowledge of Rituals Matters

The Dean explains: WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO.

A parishioner recently asked me about the significance and function of the various types of linen that are used during the celebration of Mass. The use of the silverware (chalice, paten, ciborium and so on) is familiar to most people but perhaps the linen is focused on a little less. So, here are the functions of the linen that you will see used most often at Mass, be it a Sunday or a weekday Mass.

Altar Cloth: This white cloth is placed over the top of every altar, usually covering the whole of the upper surface of the altar and sometimes draping over the sides. It is usually left on the altar, only being removed for washing and on Good Friday and Holy Saturday when the altar is meant to be bare. The altar cloth honours the altar which, of course, represents Christ. The altar cloth also has the practical purpose of absorbing any consecrated wine that might be spilt during a celebration of Mass.

In our cathedral, the altar cloth sits upon another cloth which is decorative in nature and has colours which reflect the liturgical colour of the day or season.

Corporal: The corporal is a large white cloth that sits on top of the altar cloth. On it are placed the vessels that contain the bread and wine that will be consecrated at the Mass. It is folded twice in threes, making nine squares when it is unfolded for use. This means that when it is folded again after Communion, any particles of the consecrated host will be captured. This is why the corporal should never be unfolded on the altar in a hasty manner or, even worse, flipped over or shaken out!

Purificator (also Purifier): This is a piece of white linen that is used to wipe the edges of the chalices used during Holy Communion, so that they are cleaned for the next communicant to use. During the current COVID issues however, they aren't needed too much! Purificators are folded into three parts and may have a cross embroidered on them.

Finger Towel: This piece of linen's name gives its use away: it is used for the priest to dry his fingers after the *lavabo*, the washing of his hands or fingers prior to beginning the Eucharistic Prayer and often again after Communion. Although the other pieces of linen are required to be white, finger towels can be any colour, though white seems to be the norm. Finger towels come in various types of materials, sometimes the same cotton that is used for hand towels in your bathroom at home.

Pall: The pall, (pronounced as the name Paul), is a small square piece of linen, often of the liturgical colour of the day, which is placed on top of the chalice of consecrated wine during the Eucharistic Prayer. Its purpose is to stop anything falling into the

chalice with the wine, especially insects which are often attracted by the sugars in the wine. The pall is usually stiffened by a piece of cardboard or plastic. It is laundered by simply removing the cardboard or plastic first and treating it like any other piece of altar linen.

On a final note, it is important that the various linens used at Mass are washed carefully because of the nature of what stains them: the Precious Blood in particular. Altar linens are soaked in water, which is then tipped down a sacrarium (or onto the garden if they are laundered away from the church), a special sink that drains to the ground, meaning that any sacred elements are not sent to the usual place that wastewater is sent to. Following this, the linens are laundered the usual way.

Deacon Matthew preparing the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Just visible on top of the **Altar Cloth**



is the **Corporal**. Note the **Pall** on top of the chalice.



←**The Sacramentum** is located in the work Sacristy — it is a special sink that drains to the ground, meaning that any sacred elements are not sent to the usual place where wastewater is sent.

Recognising Musical Talent Matters



Congratulations Patrick!

In a previous edition of *St Pat's Matters*, Patrick Newman, Organ Scholar, here at the Cathedral, was congratulated for successfully completing his Australian Music Examination Board Associate in Music (AMusA) in Organ last December, under the tutelage of Mr Bernard Kirkpatrick, the Cathedral's Director of Music

Above a very proud Bernard poses with a happy Patrick, his Diploma in hand, received at the Awards Ceremony, which took place recently on Sunday 19th June 2022, at the University of NSW in Kensington.

It was attended by members of the academic community and State Board Members. The ceremony was introduced and hosted by Professor Anna Reid, Head of School and Dean of Sydney Conservatorium and State Chairperson AMEB (NSW). Awards were presented to Diplomats by Mr Paul Martin, Chief Executive Officer of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

Intermingled with the award presentations were musical items performed by some exceptional students.

A milestone for Patrick; a special memory for his proud parents, Peter and Priscilla and gratitude from the cathedral parish for the blessing of experiencing Patrick's organ playing, in particular at 11am Mass on Sundays.



Proud Parents & son

HOSPITALITY MATTERS

Great occasions for serving God come seldom
Little ones surround us daily

The Hospitality Team is always on the lookout for new recruits to help in the Cloister Café for morning teas after 9:30 and 11am Masses on Sunday.

So I was jubilant when some time back team member Leonard Aaron convinced not one, but two couples — the Cherians and Revollars — who just happened to be at the cafe when he was on duty, to volunteer to join the team. (Leonard was absolutely chuffed at his successful recruiting technique!)



So here are Richard and Sheena Cherian still smiling after their first Sunday of service on 29th May, partnering with long time members Joanne and Bob Edgar, whose welcoming and helpful manner certainly helped calmed first time nerves. Long time

However, I neglected to 'snap' Ely and Angel Revollar on their first duty. So maybe next issue.



Marjorie Simpson served in St Pat's Hospitality Team way back in the pro Cathedral Days (pre 2003) Sadly many years ago ill health and moving house forced her reluctant resignation.

But when she and husband Greg were at the Seniors' Breakfast on St Patrick's Day, she came into the kitchen and was horrified to see that the original 3 tea cosies she'd made for the teapots were still in use! We calculated they were at least 18 years old! Determined to replace them Marjorie took home a teapot as a template so her new creations fitted perfectly. To ensure the cosies were fitted on the teapots correctly, she even labelled which aperture was for the handles, so there would be no mistake. Ingenious!

Just goes to show even when parishioners leave there is a bond that still ties them to the parish

The email below, titled Story of a Bell-ringer, arrived at the Parish Office on 2nd February.

Greetings from Widnes in England. I have written a long blog on my Facebook site (Letter from Widnes) telling the story of how, as a teenager in the 1960s I rang the bells now happily pealing away in your beautiful cathedral. I included many photos of your church and, of course, of the bells.

Widnes, my home town, has, like your city a famous Rugby League team (Widnes Vikings). It also has a bridge, similar to Sydney Harbour Bridge, spanning the River Mersey. When our bridge was opened in 1961 by Princess Alexandra, it boasted the 3rd largest span in the world. So we have much in common.

I'm delighted the bells that played an important part of my teenage years are being put to good use in Australia. Long may they ring....

Kind regards from Larry Neild

Here's part of Larry's blog, not only sharing his bellringing experiences, including research about the history of the church who inherited the bells of St Paul's in Widnes.

My swingin' sixties took place in the tower at St Paul's in Victoria Square. I was one of the bellringers, a volunteer job I held for some years along with Brian, Phil and a few mates. We were like modern day Quazimodos the way we navigated the tower, from the bell-ringing chamber, to the open bells, and then up a wooden ladder to the very top of the tower to enjoy the views.

We didn't ring the bells in the traditional way, by swinging them. Instead each bell had a clanger, a hammer, connected by ropes to a frame in the ringing chamber. It meant one person rang all eight bells at once, with somebody else taking over after a minute or so. It worked well, so long as there were at least two or three of us ringing in turn. Sometimes, only one of us was on duty. It was a nice little earner, ringing the bells for weddings, for which we earned ten bob or so.

For a lone ringer like a scrawny, little ragamuffin like me, the worse thing was if

the bride didn't get to the church on time. I had to ring the bells until the organist started playing 'Here comes the bride'. A light flashed in the ringing chamber to signal me to stop clanging the eight bells. Sheer relief! My arms often ached after ringing well past the bride's booked appointment.

When Widnes won the Rugby League Challenge Cup, the square was crammed full for a civic welcome. Me and the lads had learned how to play "When the Saints come marching home". It was the only song of its type that could be rung on the eight bells. Years later I was so saddened to learn that the bells had been silenced. They were taken away.

The other day, I by chance had a chat with an old friend in Liverpool, the son of one of the old photographers I worked with for many years at the *Post and Echo*.

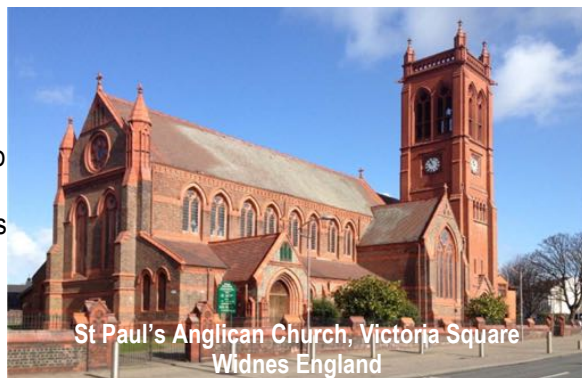
When I last spoke to Nick, he was employed as the Emergency Planning Officer in Liverpool.....Nick was also a bellringer in Liverpool, and is still a dedicated campanologist.

I lamented to him about the way the bells of St Paul's had been silenced. "But they are not silenced any more, they are happily ringing away," said Nick.

Wow! I couldn't believe it. Six of our wonderful bells are pealing away every week at a Roman Catholic Cathedral thousands of miles away in Australia.....

I checked it out and there was the story of the bells I had rung in St Paul's as a teenager. Actually it was a bit emotional as I was re-united (via wonderful) photos of the bells being blessed and consecrated in a ceremony in their new home within St Patrick's Cathedral in the Australian city of Parramatta. Each bell was named after a saint.....

The dream of installing a peal of bells at St Patrick's Cathedral dates back to 1853. In 2019, the arrival from England of eight specially commissioned bells began the final chapter in an epic 167-year quest to install a 'ring' of bells in the spire of St Patrick's. They now accompany the St Patrick bell, donated by St



Patrick's parishioners commemorating Monsignor John Rigney and his life of faithful service.

Six of the bells are over 100 years old and were sourced from St Paul's Anglican Church in Widnes, Liverpool, England.

....."Patrick" chimed faithfully for 92 years, until 19 February 1996, when the Cathedral was destroyed by fire. Only the stone walls remained. Stranded in the charred ruins of the tower, "Patrick" was removed for cleaning and conservation. In 2003, "Patrick" was restored to the spire of the newly completed St Patrick's Cathedral.....

The bells were shipped to St Patrick's by the Keltek Trust, a charity that finds new homes for 'orphaned' church bells. A seventh St Paul's bell is now homed in a church in South Wales, while the eighth seeks a new home. Wouldn't it be wonderful if that bell could return to St Paul's?



Not Sydney Harbour Bridge below, but the look alike Silver Jubilee Bridge, Widnes.





"Where is he? You said you were going to meet him."

"Just a little while and then the priest will come to the altar, and you will see Jesus."

Just as Ben's family entered Holy Spirit Church, they immediately began looking for a seat in the pew in the last row. Finding their seats, the four of them settled down.

Their young son, Ben, sat between his parents. At first, he looked at his neighbours to the side and in front. They were all adults and praying to themselves. Ben then turned his attention further afield.

His neighbour, a little girl, Charlotte, was sitting on the first pew on the opposite side. He called out to her in a sotto voice, "I'm here to see Jesus. Are you a good girl or naughty girl?"

Before Charlotte could reply, the priest came onto the altar. He was accompanied by altar boys. The priest wore a chasuble adorned with beautifully painted grapes and a golden chalice over a white robe which was as white as snow. The altar boys were dressed in white smocks and red tunics.



When Ben saw the sight of the priest and the six altar boys, he stood with surprise. After the priest and the altar boys took their places, Ben came out of his stupor. Ben turned to speak to his mother in a soft, awe-struck voice. He told his mother, "I saw Jesus and his angels. They have come to stay with us. Jesus has clothes from heaven. No one has clothes so brilliant."

His mother was happy because her son was so quiet. She touched his shoulder with her hand and gave it a mild squeeze. But Ben was in a trance by Jesus. The trance was for a short while. Ben jumped out of his seat and went near his mother and asked in a voice that could be heard by all the surrounding people. "Why is Jesus not smiling? Why is he not talking to me and to you and daddy and baby Joel?"

His mother knew that once he started his questions, he needed answers to them immediately. But this time he stood in the aisle and staring at the priest as if he knew something that only he is secret to. Mum and dad were on

high alert with Ben and watched him closely. Mother gave the baby to Dad to hold so that she would be able to stop Ben from creating any trouble.

Just then she heard Ben saying in a friendly but loud voice, "Come on Charlotte, we will play with Jesus. We have come to see him". Ben waited for Charlotte to join him, but her parents held her tightly. People near them smiled quietly.

Ben was not afraid. He knew that Jesus loved him and would talk to him kindly. So, he marched to the priest and spoke to him in a loud voice, "Good morning, Jesus. Thank you for coming to see us and talk to us."

The whole church went silent as it was consecration time when people kneel, with no noise from the furniture or any other distraction. Only the priest said, "My Lord and My God", for all the people to hear.

When he heard another voice so close to his, he stopped and opened his mouth. At once Ben talked to him saying, "My mummy told me about you. You are really good looking".

Immediately there was noise and confusion around the altar. The priest was still opening and closing his mouth, the altar boys ran towards the altar and Ben's mother ran towards her son.

Fortunately, the scene quickly returned to normal. Everyone went on with their duties-the priest got on with the consecration, the altar boys took their places and Ben's mother pulled her son towards her. In the wink of an eye, she hugged him tightly and quickly walked out of the church.

Ben's mum and dad waited outside on the porch of the church. When the service was over, the people came out in large numbers. They came over to Ben's parents and praised Ben who had seen Jesus at the altar and was not afraid.

The priest came out and Mum and Dad went forward and offered their apologies for the little boy's disturbance during the service. The priest stopped their apologies and reassured them.

Meanwhile, Ben, was happily gamboling with the butterflies and with his friend, Charlotte.





*Families
gather for
their
children's
First
Eucharist*