



ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2022







## Table of

# CONTENTS

Our Mission	4
About Us	5
From the Dean	6
Finance	9
Liturgy	15
Children's Liturgy	17
Music	19
Sacraments	23
Credo Youth	28
Hospitality	30
St Pat's Matters Magazine	34
Formation - SRE	35
Formation - Parish Base	37
Social Justice	38

# OUR MISSION



MISSIONARY



PRAYERFUL



PROPHETIC



PASTORAL



FOCUSED ON SOCIAL JUSTICE



EMPOWERING THE FAITHFUL



[enquiry@stpatrcathedral.com.au](mailto:enquiry@stpatrcathedral.com.au)



[www.stpatrcathedral.com.au](http://www.stpatrcathedral.com.au)





# ABOUT US

St Patrick's Parish, Parramatta is known as The Cradle of Catholicism in Australia. Why? Because it has the oldest Catholic Parish School in Australia, the oldest mortuary Chapel, the first convent (Sisters of Charity) was here and the first nun was professed in Parramatta. Its parish registers are full of pioneer names of both priests and laity.

On 19 April 1803 at Government House Parramatta, Governor King's proclamation was read to the assembled Catholics permitting Rev Fr Dixon to say Mass on a rotation basis at Sydney, Parramatta and Hawkesbury. Parramatta's first Mass was said on 22 May.

In 1820-21, Father J J Therry established a school in Hunter Street Parramatta and there has been a school attached to the parish ever since.

Thomas Nugent's headstone dated 29 April 1824 is the oldest surviving monument in St Patrick's Cemetery, the land of which was granted to the Catholic Church through the efforts of Father Therry. In 1846 a Mortuary Chapel was built over the remains of Father McCarthy OFM Cap. and on All Souls' Day Mass is celebrated in this tiny chapel for all those pioneers and early priests who are buried in its sacred ground.

In 1839 at the invitation of Dr Polding, the Sisters of Charity came to the Colony to help the women in the Parramatta Female Factory. Their Convent, the first in the Colony, was across the road from the present Church and on 9 March 1839, in St Patrick's Church, a novice, Sister Mary Xavier Williams became the first nun professed on Australian soil.

The Foundation Stone for the first St Patrick's Church was laid on St Patrick's Day 1836 and was consecrated 'with all the pomp and formality of the Roman Church', on 28 May 1837. By 1854 the existing Church was in poor repair and the Foundation stone of a new church was laid on 13 August with the tower and spire added in the 1880's. In 1936 a new church was built on the site to meet the needs of a growing congregation.

In 1986 St Patrick's became the Cathedral Church in the new diocese of Parramatta, an area, which stretches in a wedge from Rydalmere to Blackheath. On 19 February 1996 this beautiful though small cathedral was destroyed by fire - only the stone walls remained.

On 29 November 2003 the new St Patrick's Cathedral was dedicated. The old St Patrick's Cathedral is now a Blessed Sacrament Chapel and adjoining it is a large contemporary Cathedral. The design of Mitchell, Giurgola and Thorp incorporates the dictums of Vatican II and is decorated with the work of Australian artists and craftsmen and women.

The rich history that is part of the St Patrick Parramatta's story is a testimony to the faith of its community. Like those that have gone before them, the St Patrick's parish community continue to make Christ known through the various activities they lead and organise for the parish community, the Diocese of Parramatta, as well as for the wider Parramatta community.



# FROM THE DEAN

*The parish is to be missionary, prophetic, prayerful, and pastoral, with a focus on social justice and empowerment of the faithful.*

In reading through what I wrote for last year's Annual Report, I reflected on how I tried to end my report on an upbeat note, drawing readers' attention to the spirit that prevailed after the devastating fire at the cathedral in 1996. Of course, the sole reason for wanting to end on a positive note was the rather gloomy report which preceded it, marked by the negative effects wrought by the Covid pandemic and the mandatory closure of the cathedral to worshippers for most of the second half of 2021. It was only towards the end of February this year that most of the restrictions such as mask-wearing and social distancing were lifted for places of worship such as ours.

I do feel that over the intervening months a positive spirit has prevailed and believe that things are indeed "returning to normal" for the most part. All of our ministries are now operating as they were in pre-pandemic times and our congregation numbers are up on what they were a few months ago, though not yet to the same level as they were before Covid struck. There are undoubtedly still some people who feel vulnerable and are reluctant to return just yet, and probably some who have fallen "out of the habit" of coming to Mass and instead feel that they receive sufficient nourishment via online Masses or televised services.

Yet, as I mentioned in my report last year, "returning to normal" cannot mean returning to our old ways. We can "return to normal" in the sense of maintaining our regular Mass schedule, continuing to conduct our other sacraments such as baptisms, weddings and reconciliation as we did previously, undertaking the administration of the parish as in the past, but what we must not do is miss the opportunity to discern a way forward as a parish which has a defined vision in accordance with that outlined by Bishop Vincent and which was detailed in my report last year. In summary: "the parish is to be missionary, prophetic, prayerful and pastoral, with a focus on social justice and empowerment of the faithful."



But how to achieve this? How to ensure that we best embrace this vision and put it into practice that it may bear fruit? The best means to achieve this end is to have a strong leadership team which takes on the task of discerning the needs of the parish and ensuring that action is taken to meet these needs in accordance with Bishop Vincent's vision. To that end, we will be seeking to revitalise the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) sometime in the first half of 2023. The PPC will be reformed after a period of discernment by a small leadership team and a large meeting for parishioners which will make the fruits of the discernment known and the chance for further discussion before the PPC is once again operational.

I encourage you to read through the various sections of the Annual Report to get an idea of how the past year has been for St Patrick's, especially in those areas of ministry with which you are not directly connected. Over this past year we have seen the beginnings of the seniors' ministry and some new-style formation sessions. We held a successful St Patrick's Day Fair and we will be having a small Spring Fair coming up in September. Of course, there is much more to contemplate in this report and I would encourage you to do so.

I'd like to leave you with a question which I think will be good to hold in the back of our minds as we move forward as a post-pandemic Christian community: What difference does this parish make to the community of which it is a part? To phrase it a little more bluntly: Would the local community notice if we weren't here? Imagine that the buildings of the cathedral precinct were still standing but no one came to Mass or undertook any sort of religious activity as we currently do. Would the local community be diminished in any way? Is it the case that most people in the community interact with the cathedral in simply admiring the buildings and using the hall for meetings or social gatherings? Does our presence here as the Body of Christ really have a positive impact on the Parramatta area? Is it the case that we exist only for our own spiritual benefit? I am hoping that in the year ahead we have the courage to answer these questions honestly for it is only in doing so that we can ensure that we bear the fruits that God asks of us.





“

Does our presence here as the Body of Christ really have a positive impact on the Parramatta area? Is it the case that we exist only for our own spiritual benefit? I am hoping that in the year ahead we have the courage to answer these questions honestly for it is only in doing so that we can ensure that we bear the fruits that God asks of us.

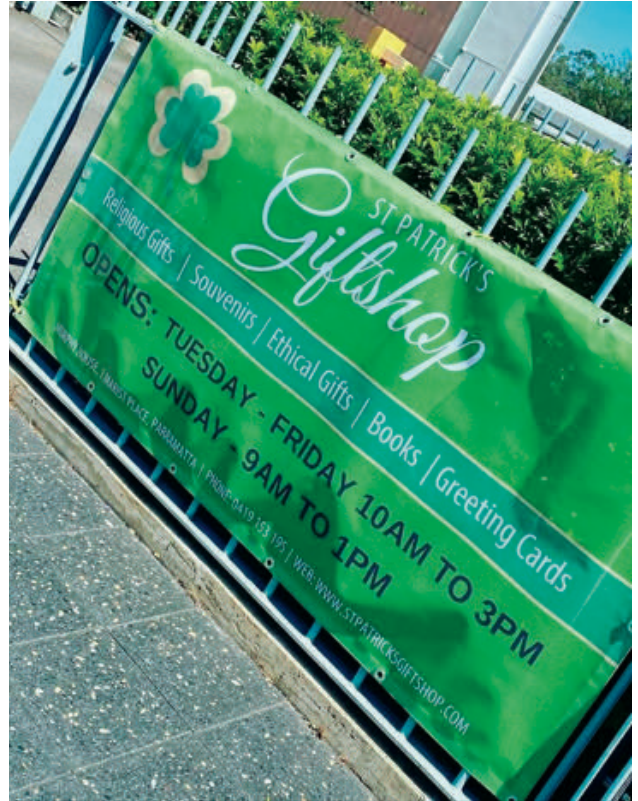
”

I commend to you this Annual Report and would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who contributed to it through their hard work and dedication to the many areas of ministry that make up our wonderful cathedral parish of St Patrick.

With every blessing,  
Fr Robert Riedling  
Dean and Administrator



# FINANCE



## Purpose and Membership

All parishes are required under canon law to have a Parish Finance Committee (PFC) to assist the parish priest in the administration of the goods of the parish. The PFC is required to include at least three members of the faithful of the parish, has a consultative role and meets approximately five times a year.

The members of the current PFC are: Fr Robert Riedling (Dean), Fr Chris del Rosario, Mr Sabu Thomas (member), Ms Cathy Dearie (member), Ms Margery Jackman (Chair), Ms Mili Lee (ex officio - Parish) and Mr Alfie Ramirez (ex officio - Diocese).

Father Riedling, as the Dean of the Cathedral, is responsible for the finances of the parish. This is a delegated responsibility of the Bishop. The Chancery provides the professional resources to do the day to day financial management involved in

consultation with the Dean and the Cathedral parish Manager. This involves such activities as record keeping and transactions related to cathedral income and expenditure. In this regard, the PFC is very appreciative of the services of Mr Alfie Ramirez who is the Financial Administrator of the cathedral parish.

This year has been another challenging one with members of the PFC incorporating both face-to-face and virtual attendance at meetings as required. The committee is also very aware that it has and continues to be a challenging time for many parishioners, both personally and financially, and we are very appreciative of the generosity and faithfulness of all those who continue to support the parish financially.

## Key Trends

- **Parish Income**

Parish income (incl. Diocesan Funding & ATO Payments) declined by 12% primarily due to:

- \$39k received as Government payments in FY 22, compared to \$184k received in FY 21
- lower loose 2nd collections (by 20% | \$29k) compared to FY 21
- lower rental income (by 57% | \$32k) compared to FY 21

- **Parish Expenses**

Parish expenditure reduced by 13% due to decline in:

- Car repairs and maintenance costs (by 24% | \$8k)
- Printing, stationery & postage (by 10% | \$4k)
- Repairs and maintenance (by 26% | \$43k)
- Computer expenses (by 69% | \$16k)
- Cost of stock purchased (by 73% | \$44k)

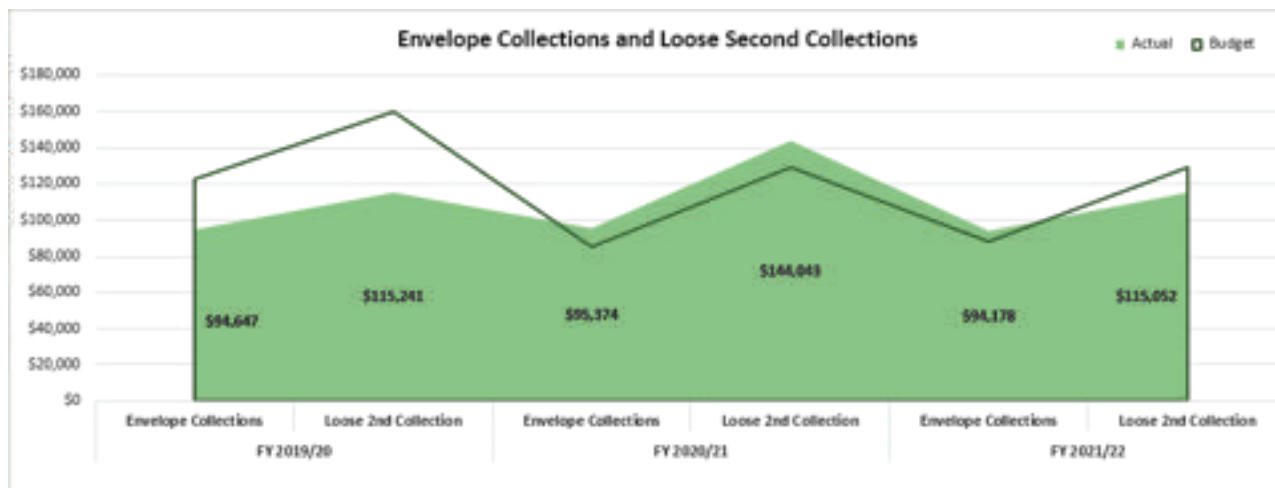
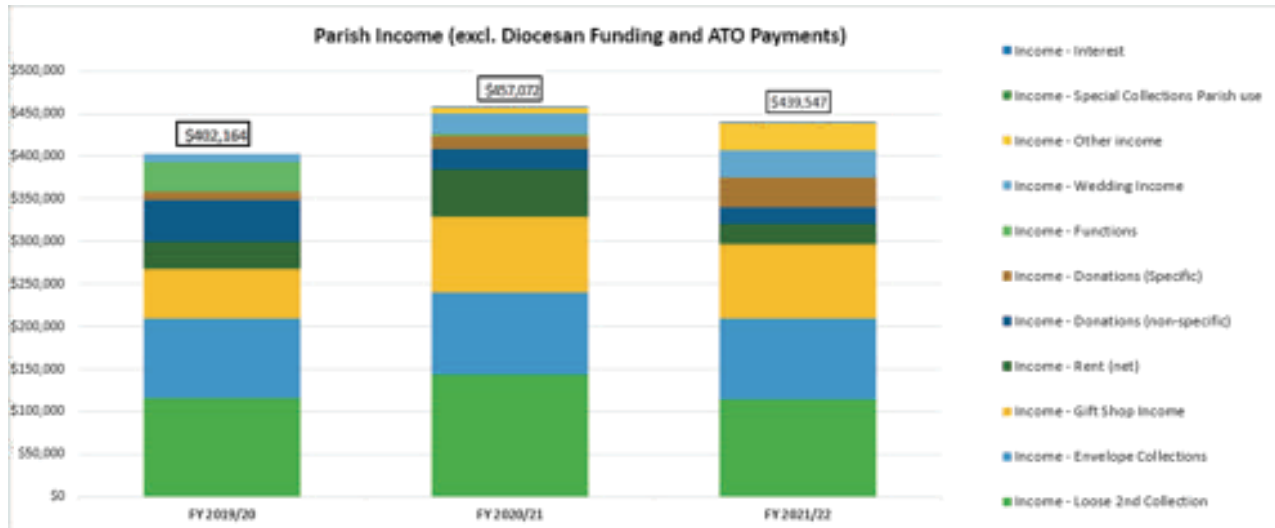
- **Overall Financial Position.**

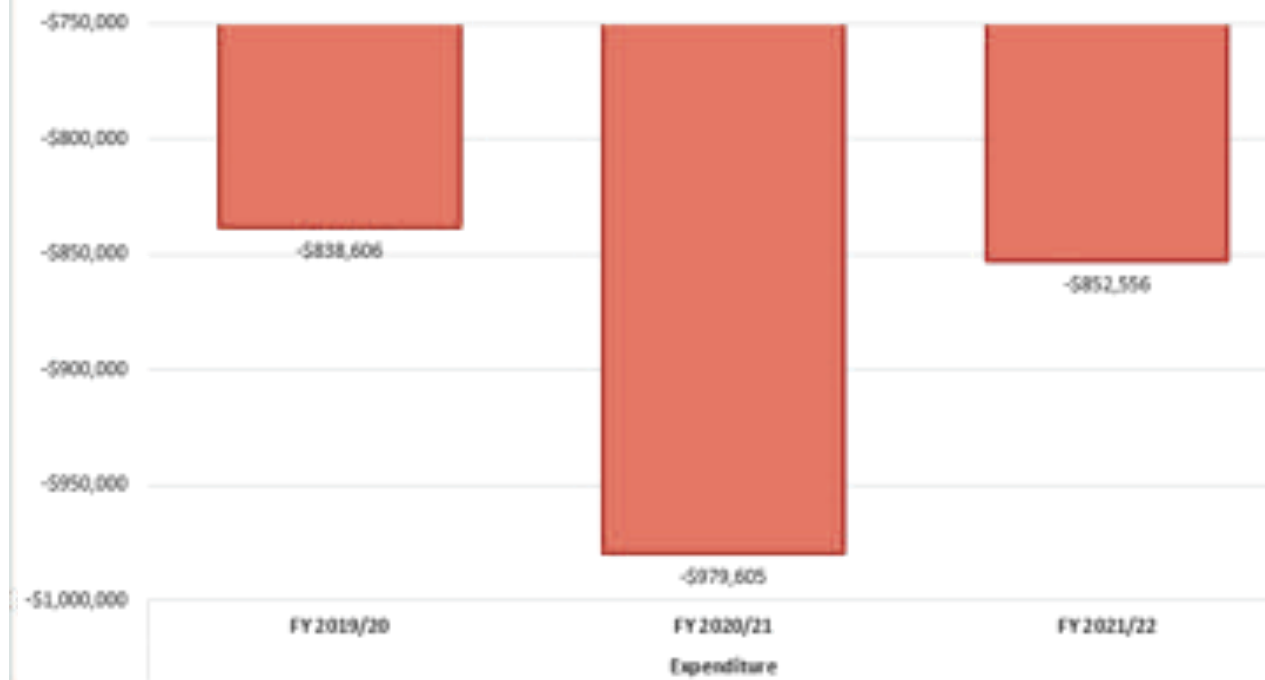
On a further note:

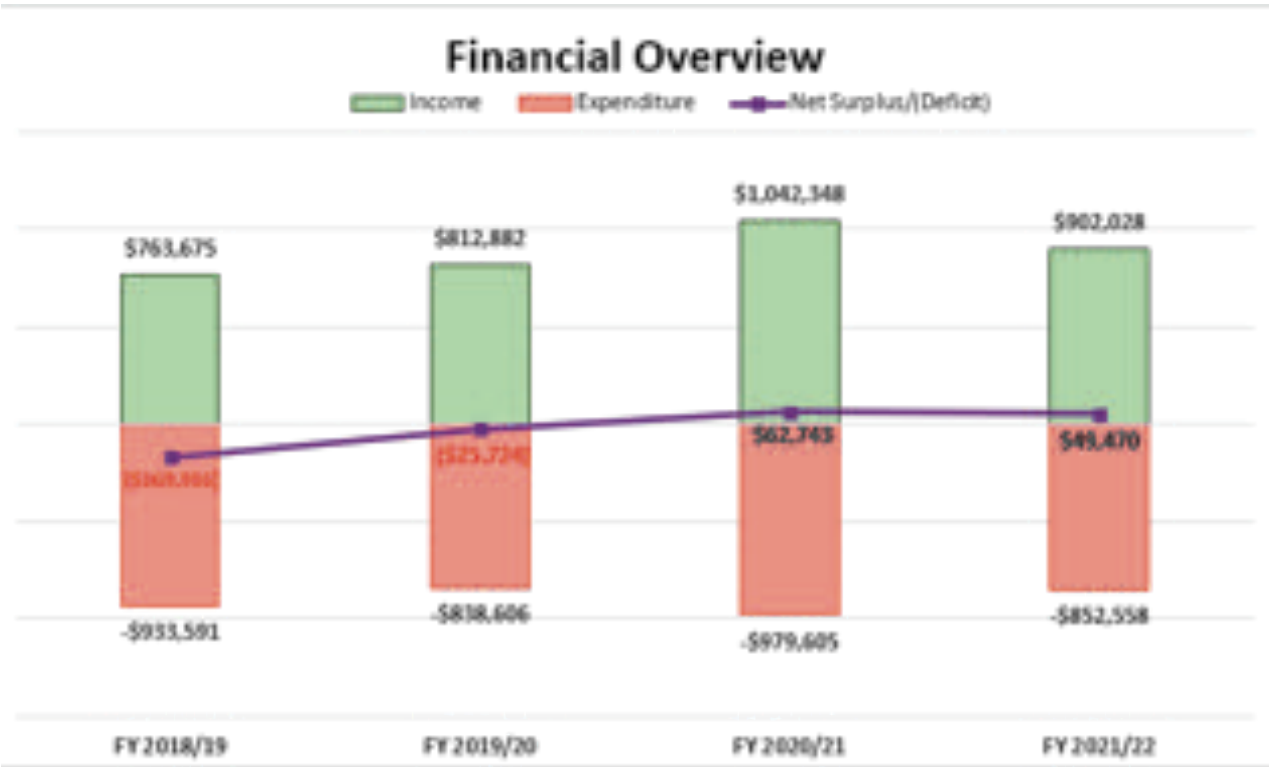
- Diocesan funding for the operations of Parramatta Cathedral was increased by \$22k
- Donations (specific) increased (by 109% | \$18k)
- Wedding income increased (by 28% | \$7k)
- Gift shop income increased (by 17% | \$16k)
- Envelope collections similar to FY 21 level



## Key Trends



**Income Overview (incl. Diocesan Funding)****Expenditure Overview**



- Recurrent Diocesan Grant





## Looking Ahead

The Committee thanks our parishioners, priests and deacons, members of the parish staff and all who continue to support the work of the PFC on behalf of the Parish of St Patrick's, Parramatta.

Members of the Parish Finance Committee



## St Patrick's Gift Shop

### Opening Hours

Monday to Friday: 10:00am - 3:00pm

Sunday: 9:00am - 1:00pm

Use the QR code to go to our website or to find us on Facebook:



# LITURGY

Fr Chris Del Rosario - Liturgy Coordinator & Diocesan Master of Ceremonies



Since September 2021 liturgy at St. Patrick's Cathedral has maintained its excellent standard despite the changing climate. At the time of my last report Greater Sydney and many parts of Australia were experiencing a harsh lockdown. This again affected the way the Cathedral Parish worshipped as we were forced to return to livestream Masses and to cease the administration of other sacraments.

On 11 October many restrictions were lifted and the Cathedral began to resume its normal liturgical practice. Whilst this was certainly a joyful time as we finally opened the cathedral doors to the public, our normal liturgical practice was subdued due to several government mandates.

Places of worship had to abide by density limits and the mask mandate. One difficulty I recall was organising additional extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion as we couldn't allow those Mass attendees in the cloister inside the cathedral as that would contravene the designated density limit. Additionally, rostering proved difficult as team members would contract the virus which rendered them homebound for two weeks. The post-lockdown period was most certainly a difficult time liturgically. I have to commend the team for their resilience during this time. I recall asking several team members to double in roles during Mass and, at times, to assist at several Masses on Sunday.



# LITURGY

In each case members were happy to assist. Thank you to those who assisted during this time.

Post-lockdown also saw the loss of several members of the liturgical team. With the virus still rampant in the community a few decided to step down from the team. I thank them for their generosity and commitment over the years. Please know the door is always open for your return. Despite our losses the team added several new altar servers and readers which has proved to be a blessing. Previously I would struggle filling in the roster each month. Now I struggle rostering every person each month as the team has grown rapidly. It shows the Lord's work in guiding many men and women to use their gifts and talents to serve Him in the liturgy.

As we look to the future I am very pleased and proud of the liturgical team for their love and devotion to the sacred liturgy. Despite the many disruptions they have continued to maintain an excellent standard. Fr. Peter Williams, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia, has reiterated to me that the Cathedral Parish should be the liturgical standard for the Diocese. I can proudly say through the efforts of the liturgy team we are upholding that standard. Thank you again to the liturgy team for their commitment and reverence to the Mass.

## Liturgical ministers as of 15 August 2022

	September 2021	August 2022
Acolytes	14	20
Altar Servers	35	29
Extraordinary Ministers	31	31
Readers	46	44



# LITURGY

## Children's Liturgy

Kirrily Aguilera - Coordinator

At St. Patrick's, we are very blessed to have a thriving Children's liturgy program which has been part of our 9:30am Mass for many years. While the Covid restrictions have interrupted our program at various times during 2020 and 2021, thankfully since November 2021 we have been able to run our usual program with a Covid-safe plan in place.

For those unfamiliar with Children's Liturgy, it is basically a Liturgy of the Word adapted for children (preschool to mid-primary aged). The children are invited to come forward at the start of Mass where they receive a special blessing. They are then led to the Parish hall where they gather around a sacred space set up especially for the liturgy. This is usually a small table with a cloth in the appropriate liturgical colour, crucifix, LED candle and lectionary. The Children's Liturgy leaders then lead the children through the introductory rite and proclamation of the Gospel. Then there is time for reflection on the Gospel in a way that is age-appropriate and engaging. Sometimes, this might involve re-enacting the Gospel, a guided discussion, craft or song. We then follow with the Apostles' Creed, Prayers of Intercession and Prayer of Dismissal. The children then return to Mass where they are involved in the Presentation of the Gifts.

Children's liturgy is run every Sunday during term time and usually between 15-35 children attend each week. It is an important parish ministry as it helps families with young children feel welcome at Mass and therefore encourages their Mass attendance. It is wonderful to see many young families coming to 9:30am Mass especially so their children can experience our Children's Liturgy. Many of these children also attend our Credo Junior program, further supporting their faith formation and connection with the St Patrick's Parish community.



# LITURGY

## Children's Liturgy



Children's Liturgy would not be possible without the support of our wonderful Cathedral priests. Thank you especially to Marilyn Cook who has coordinated this ministry for over 25 years and only handed over the reins to me in the middle of 2021. Thank you to our enthusiastic 2022 Children's Liturgy team who so generously share their faith and gifts with the children of our parish.

Thank You from Our Team

Paula Meli  
Jessie Sebartanam  
Claire and Stephen Pospischil  
Marilyn and Graham Cook  
Edward Safardi  
Grace Bondoc  
Sarah Cook  
Danielle and Mitchell Fleming

# MUSIC

Bernard Kirkpatrick - Director Of Music



2021-2022 has been another year marked out in particular by the ups and downs caused by the ongoing Covid pandemic. Just when we all thought things were getting better and the worst wave of the virus past us, another snap lockdown was implemented on 22 July, again restricting music and congregational attendances and/or participation at all cathedral liturgies. Mask-wearing, social distancing and precautionary self-isolation are now familiar practices to all of us.

The new live-streaming facilities were again engaged to broadcast daily Mass, as well as the 11:00am Solemn Mass and several solemnities, including those celebrating St. John the Baptist, Ss. Peter & Paul, Mary MacKillop, Assumption of the BVM, All Saints Day and the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day – 02 November).



The live-streaming of cathedral liturgies has continued at the 11.00am Mass, and has become a useful pastoral 'tool' to enable other special liturgies, ranging from diocesan events to parish weddings and funerals to be shared with viewers at home anywhere on the planet!

As the end of the year 2021 approached, everyone anxiously awaited the decision of the government regarding Christmas celebrations in churches. Luckily, a last minute decision relaxed restrictions in time for our Cathedral Christmas Masses to occur in the usual manner, and happily music was provided for all the usual sung liturgies, albeit with some restrictions still remaining on congregational singing. The year 2022 got off to a more promising start, and to date no further lockdowns or restrictions on music in churches.



# MUSIC

Some highlight events in 2021/2022 included:

- The Diocesan Opening Mass of the Plenary Council & Closing Mass of the Plenary Council
- Red Mass for the Opening of the Legal Year
- Neophytes Mass
- Commission of Liturgical Ministers
- First Holy Communion - 9:30am Mass - Organ & Cantor with St. Patrick's Primary School Choir
- Vespers of St. Mary MacKillop and Bishop of Parramatta Diocesan Awards

## Cathedral Music Recruitment Campaign

Thanks to the initiative of several younger choir members (with "tech-savvy" skills and social media expertise) a recruitment campaign for additional singers to join the music ministry as cantors or members of the cathedral choir was initiated by means of a promotional choir video and online application process. As a result, we were fortunate to identify several new young singers who have since joined the choir, including Veronica, Toby, Bridget and Richard. Special thanks go to Johanne, Eric and Lauren for their cameo roles and testimonies, and to Sam (who is both a cantor and chorister, and who recently has taken on administrative and library roles within the choir).

## Funeral of Cantor Danilo Dingle

Having been blessed with several new and talented recruits, within the last year we must also acknowledge the loss of one of beloved cantors, Danilo Dingle, who passed into eternal life on 4th November 2021. Danny had given over 15 years of service to the cathedral as one of the regular cantors, known to many in the Vigil, 9:30am and 6:00pm congregations. Sadly, Danny passed away after a long illness and a fitting Solemn Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated in the cathedral for his soul. No doubt he is now singing with the celestial choirs in Heaven. RIP Danny!



## Baby Blessings

Congratulations are also due to Ivy (Alto) and Tim (former Tenor) who were blessed with a beautiful baby boy, Max, on 03 August 2021. A baptism ceremony was held in St. Patrick's Cathedral Chapel with music provided by members of the cathedral music team.

## Wedding Bells

On Saturday 30 July two of our musicians, Eric Grella (organist and assistant choir conductor) and Bianca Thio (Soprano) were married after a long romance which started when they met in the cathedral choir. We also look forward to the wedding of another chorister, Lauren (Soprano) who is getting married later in 2022.

## Concerts

Unfortunately, some of the regular annual concert performances held each year were forced to cancel due to Covid. Of particular note were the



# MUSIC



cancellation of the “Noel Noel” Brandenburg Orchestra and Choir; the Philharmonia Choir concert; and the Sydney Bach Akademie. In addition, the Sydney Organ Competition senior section performances which were scheduled for October on our 1898 Norman & Beard Pipe Organ was also cancelled. However, the newly-formed Western Sydney Philharmonic were able to give a delightful performance on 13 June.

Fortunately, this year is looking more musical with the abovementioned concerts all re-scheduled for performance in 2022.

## Ordination to Priesthood

In the 2021-2022 year the diocese was blessed to have ordained a number of young men, including Deacon Matthew Dimian who was immediately appointed as the new cathedral deacon. Another Deacon, Andrew Rooney, is soon to be ordained, and we look forward to preparing the music for Deacon Andrew’s Ordination to the Priesthood in August 2022.

I am grateful to all of those who contribute and support the cathedral music ministry, from the diocesan funding provided for scholarships and fees, to the Dean, clergy and staff of the cathedral as well as all our very talented musical team. A final note of thanks goes to our parishioners too, for all the positive support, encouragement and participation in the music at St. Patrick’s Cathedral Parramatta.



# SACRAMENTS

Deacon Matthew Dimian

## Sacraments of Initiation

### Introduction

In the year August 2021 to August 2022, our parish continued its sacramental program joyfully and successfully despite some challenges. Over this period, the following number of candidates received the Sacraments of Initiation and the Sacrament of Reconciliation:

First Reconciliation 2021	32
First Holy Communion 2021	32
First Reconciliation 2022	41
First Holy Communion 2022	41
Confirmation 2022	91

You will note that Confirmation was not celebrated in 2021, and the number of candidates for Confirmation 2022 was double the usual number. This was because the Sacrament of Confirmation was not able to go ahead in 2021 due to the Covid pandemic and lockdowns. The intake for Confirmation 2022 thus consisted of all candidates who had registered in 2021 as well as those who registered in 2022.



### Ongoing Covid Challenges

Having a doubled Confirmation class in 2022 came with some challenges. The decision was made to split the student sessions into two streams that would meet at different times. This made the sessions more personal and manageable.

There were also sessions when a small number of families were unable to attend due to contracting Covid. We organised catch up sessions for these families, who attended eagerly once they recovered.

We have to thank and commend all the families who joyfully adapted to the changing circumstances and were eager to attend the sessions whenever they could.





## Team

Earlier this year, the parish gratefully farewelled Margaret (Meg) Gale who has been our Sacramental Coordinator for the past seven years. Following her wedding in May, Meg left her position at the parish to begin a new chapter in her life. Meg is remembered for the care, dedication, and joy that she brought to the role. I'm sure I speak on behalf of the parish when I say that we are very grateful to Meg for her generous labour in the Lord's vineyard, and we wish her all the best for the future.

Since May, the responsibility of running the Sacramental Program has been shared by our clergy, Fr Robert, Fr Chris, and myself; our parish staff, Pat, Donna, and Mili; Kerry Giumelli who has generously volunteered for the program for many years (since running it herself in years past); and Franca Bonserio, who, as Religious Education Coordinator at St Patrick's Primary, serves as an important bridge to the parish school.

Our program emphasises that parents are the first educators of their children. The role of the parish team, therefore, is to "support the home by providing a more systematic catechesis through parish-based, family-centred, school-supported programs of sacramental preparation." (Diocese of Parramatta Policy on Sacraments of Initiation). So we continue to thank and encourage parents to take up this responsibility both before and after attending the parish program.

.

## Program

There were no major changes to the program in the last year. We work closely with our Diocese's Office for Worship, following their recommended program and utilising their published resources for parents and children. We also utilise the helpful video on the Diocese's digital resource platform, The Well. For each sacrament, the process of preparation consists of two parent sessions and two parent/child sessions.





Preparation for First Holy Communion extends over three terms. It begins in December with preparation to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Advent's focus on repentance as a way of preparing the way for Christ aligns well with preparation for Our Lord's coming in Holy Communion. In Term 1 of the following year, the candidates undergo a module called 'Reflecting on Baptism,' linking the Sacrament of the Eucharist with our baptismal calling and entry into grace. Term 2 focuses on the Eucharist itself, emphasising the great gift that Our Lord gives us in his very self. The candidates receive first Holy Communion on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi. Candidates must be seven years old to receive Reconciliation and Communion.

Preparing for Confirmation starts in Term 3. The program emphasises that through a deeper reception of the Holy Spirit, this sacrament will complete candidates' initiation into the Church. This comes with great blessings, such as access to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and real responsibilities, such as witnessing to Christ in our daily lives. Candidates may enter this program at the age of ten.

## Conclusion

The team would like to thank the community for their hard work and support over the past year. We look forward to the year to come, and we ask for your prayers for this ministry, our team, all the candidates and their families.

# 26 SACRAMENTS

Donna Missio

## Baptism

### Infant Baptism

*Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the other Sacraments through water and the word.*

(Catechism of the Catholic Church n.1213)

Baptisms are available every Sunday throughout the year unless a Diocesan function is taking place. To highlight the ecclesial dimension of the Sacrament, it is customary at St Patrick's Cathedral to baptise up to four children at each ceremony, focusing on the communal nature of the Sacrament.

Baptisms at St Patrick's Cathedral have been affected over the last few years by the Covid pandemic and subsequent lockdowns which closed our Churches and put Baptisms on hold.

Baptisms have been very busy this year with 3-4 babies and young children baptised every Sunday. One noticeable difference this year is the number of families who have two or more of their children baptised at the same time.

We have had 87 babies baptised at St Patrick's Cathedral as at August 2022. In 2021 we had 61 babies baptised and in 2020 we had 54 babies baptised. Pre-Covid in 2019 we had 102 babies baptised during the year.

To book a baptism at St Patrick's Cathedral Parramatta, please call 8839 8400 or email [enquiry@stpatscathedral.com.au](mailto:enquiry@stpatscathedral.com.au)





## Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

The RCIA is a process for the enquirer that is completely driven by the Spirit and the community of faith and not by the RCIA team.

This year, thankfully, we were able to welcome a young adult into the Catholic Faith, unlike the church closure we faced in 2021 due to the Covid pandemic.

James was baptised, confirmed and received Holy Communion at the Easter Vigil Mass. This is the first time in a very long time that the Cathedral has had only one candidate for the RCIA.



## Weddings at St Patrick's Cathedral

Despite the health restriction to minimise the risk of Covid 19, weddings at the Cathedral picked up slightly at the end of 2021 and the first half of 2022.

There were 15 weddings in 2021 compared with 12 weddings as at August 2022.

A ten year comparison shows that there were four times as many weddings in 2012 compared to now.





# CREDO YOUTH



Fr Chris del Rosario

A lot has happened since the last Annual Report for youth. At the time of the last report Greater Sydney was in the midst of another lockdown and things looked quite grim for Credo Ministries. The efforts of Gen Lee and her team seemed to dissipate as government restrictions no longer allowed the youth group to meet in person. The youth team however adjusted to the difficult climate and utilised Zoom in order to come together for youth group. Gen described this period as 'difficult but rewarding'. Zoom presented its challenges as it was arduous to run youth sessions online.

However, the reward was well worth it as the childrens' smiles and laughter showed their appreciation to the team for their efforts.

As restrictions eased the youth group (Juniors and Teens) slowly returned. It took a few weeks but eventually our numbers returned and things starting looking up again. Junior Credo continued to operate whilst Teen Credo was treated to a youth retreat from the 17-19 of March. It was a fantastic weekend of prayer and reflection.

Soon after the retreat Gen announced that she would be stepping down from her role as Youth Coordinator to focus on her career in education. This was a big loss to Credo Ministries as she was key in reviving the youth group. On behalf of the parish staff I wish to acknowledge her incredible efforts and dedication to the Parish Youth Group. Shefin, one of our youth leaders, filled in for Gen but soon stepped down to focus on her future endeavours.

At this point both Deacon Matthew and myself are leading the youth group as we await the next Youth Coordinator.



# CREDO YOUTH



To the youth of our parish, thank you for your joy and enthusiasm in attending youth group. It brings both Deacon Matthew and myself great joy to see your love of God on display during youth group. Most children, after a week of school, would rather spend their Friday afternoons playing video games and watching television. You however willingly come to youth group to learn and grow in your faith alongside your peers. This is incredibly inspiring for both of us. May God continue to bless you all abundantly. To those young people who aren't too sure whether they should join... I say, 'take that leap of faith with and see the joy of the Lord in other young people like yourselves.'



# HOSPITALITY

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

This motto has motivated members of the Hospitality Group from formation in 1995, when its ministry outreach commenced: serving morning tea to parishioners and visitors after Masses on Sunday mornings, before the disastrous fire in February 1996 that destroyed the old Cathedral.

For the benefit of parishioners who are recent arrivals in St Patrick's Cathedral Parish, it's important to give a brief historical overview of this Ministry's outreach venues to help them appreciate where we've come from and how the ministry has grown and evolved.

Over that span of 27 years, our venues have included:

- the old parish hall (pre-fire),
- the Grotto Café operating out of the old Marist School block during the Pro-Cathedral "era",
- then offsite at St Pat's in the Field in the grounds of Cumberland Hospital, Fleet Street, Parramatta, during the rebuilding of our spiritual home, then finally
- the return, in November 2003, to the new Cathedral precinct to a brand new hall with much-appreciated modern facilities and now operating as the Cloister Café.

(A fuller version of the café's historic travels was published in the 2018 Annual Report).



## About Us

The team currently comprises 39 members: thirty women and nine men. This includes five married couples and one mother and daughter.

Unfortunately the initial lockdown of two weeks in late June 2021 due to Covid morphed into restrictions remaining in place until December 2021. This thwarted the intention to reopen the Cloister Café on 28 November. Finally we managed a 'swan song' Christmas morning tea on 19 December, before closure for the usual break until February 2022!



# HOSPITALITY

The pandemic's lingering presence into the new year still caused disruption to our pastoral outreach of dispensing hospitality via Sunday morning teas, with the need for strict health protocols and changes to procedures and set up.

- People had to sanitise upon entry into the Cloister Cafe;
- Those on duty wore gloves;
- Servers poured out beverages and used tongs to distribute food;
- Once served, people were encouraged to move out into the Cloister to maintain social distancing.

Difficult as the restructuring was, all agreed it was important to enable the parish community to connect socially.

Some regrets:

- The intention to invite Fr Chadi Ibrahim back for his "Farewell Morning Tea", initially planned for Sunday, 08 August, 2021, never eventuated.
- Still to be initiated: the promise to support Fr Robert in his mission to encourage parishioners to volunteer to be Welcomers before Sunday Masses — by personal invitation and through recruitment notices in the bulletin.

Some positives:

- Three-monthly duty rosters for members have been resumed.
- Recruiting of volunteers by members approaching people personally during Morning Tea as well as advertising in the Sunday Bulletin.
- Organising of the Celebratory Supper after the 2022 Easter at which the newly initiated Neophyte was congratulated and welcomed into St Pat's community.
- Setting up and serving at the special morning tea following the commissioning of the new Diocesan Pastoral Council by Bishop Vincent at 11:00am Mass on 12 June 2022.



# HOSPITALITY

- Generosity is on the increase: more parishioners are putting supplies in the Donations Basket, some even offering cash donations and others bringing along goodies to share, both home-baked and bought.

A new initiative has been a MONTHLY WELCOME TO ST PAT'S MORNING TEA, begun in June.

The proposal was suggested by Mili Lee to reinvigorate our Hospitality Ministry post-Covid, the aim being through this 'special morning tea' to welcome new parishioners and also encourage those who attend Sunday Mass regularly at St Pat's, but who still feel like strangers in the pew, to come and socialise.

Our desire is to foster in all who worship here, a sense of belonging to the Cathedral Parish.

Many of members of the Hospitality Team have been long-time volunteers committed to this important ministry outreach. As the coordinator, I am truly grateful for their years of dedication and continuing commitment.

Rob and Joanne Edgar fall into that category and readily agreed to each share a reflection on their involvement in this ministry.

From Rob:

*Joanne and I became parishioners of St Patrick's way back in 1984. Joining the Hospitality Team over twenty years ago was one of the best things we have done. At that time the church was affectionately dubbed St Patrick's in the Field, because it was relocated to the grounds of Cumberland Hospital in Fleet Street, while our current cathedral was under construction. It was an idyllic, bucolic setting. Parishioners enjoyed the time there, but moving back 'home' was very satisfying indeed.*

*I was a bit hesitant about my abilities in the kitchen at first, but I soon was able to boil the kettle unsupervised and open a packet of biscuits! Thankfully Joanne*



*is pretty handy at cooking; and, to this day, her fruit cake is still a favourite with the congregation. So much so that I have to get in early and put a piece aside for myself!*

*So many generous people prepare and donate cakes, slices and biscuits for which team members are eternally grateful. We seem to be never short of tasty treats to offer.*

*Many people have passed through the ranks of the hospitality group over those years; and there are a few notables who have been volunteers since Day One. I believe their constant motivation is a willingness to serve joyfully. Of course, another bonus is the opportunity to meet and greet new parishioners and visitors. This is the most fulfilling and joyful aspect of the ministry.*

*And then there is the clean-up... we're not allowed to go home till it's done! Seriously, it doesn't take long and everyone gets stuck in. What does take time is the badinage [humorous or witty conversation] and banter, an essential part of this reaching-out exercise. Then we all go home.*

# HOSPITALITY



From Joanne:

*For the twenty years Rob and I have been on the hospitality team, Marian has been our inspirational leader.*

*Over those years we have met and befriended many St Pat's parishioners. Conversations are easy to start over a poured cuppa. And it is wonderful to be able to introduce new parishioners to "old" parishioners.*

*My fondest memories of serving include*

- *Accommodating the likes and dislikes of people — 'milk first', 'not too much milk', 'more milk please', 'only half fill the mug please', 'just hot water please'.*
- *The generosity of people, e.g. Sesilia Lotoaniu's incredible mother, Seini, who, whenever Sesilia does duty sends along a "mountain" of home-baked delicious scones and cakes — an awesome sight to behold.*

- *The pleasure of pouring from our pots elegantly swathed in St Pat's tea cosies, crafted and generously donated by Marjorie Simpson, a former hospitality member, for many years.*

*Clean up time is also fun...a great chance to catch up with fellow volunteers and the late stayers.*

*Rob and I have made life long friends with our fellow volunteers. For me, calling it a duty seems far from correct. It is a blessing.*

*To conclude, I assure the parish community that team members dispense hospitality with our motto ever upper most in their minds. In our service we also take to heart what St Mary of the Cross MacKillop counselled her sisters to do:*

*"Bloom where you're planted."*



# ST PAT'S MATTERS MAGAZINE

Marian Polizzi

The magazine is now in its 25th year of publication. Since the 2021 Annual Report Issues 108 to 111 have been published.

The purpose of St Pat's Matters:

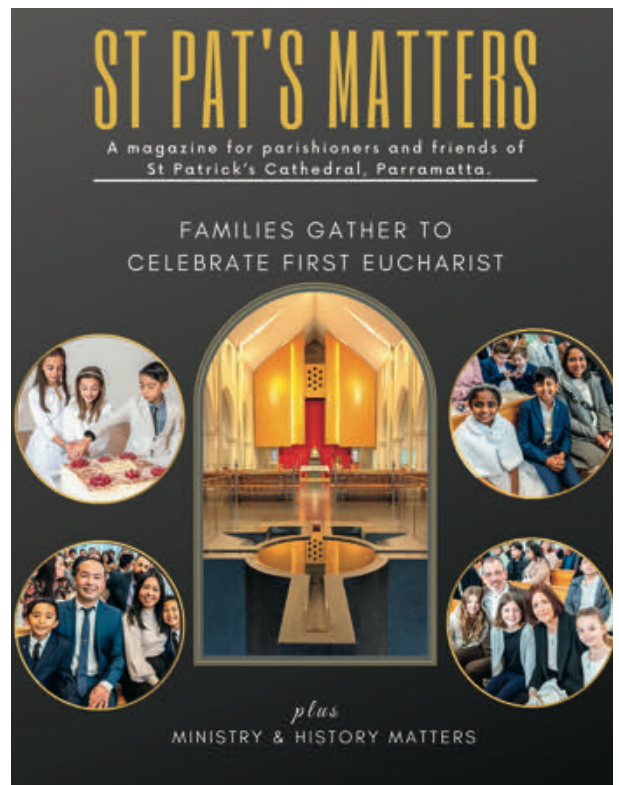
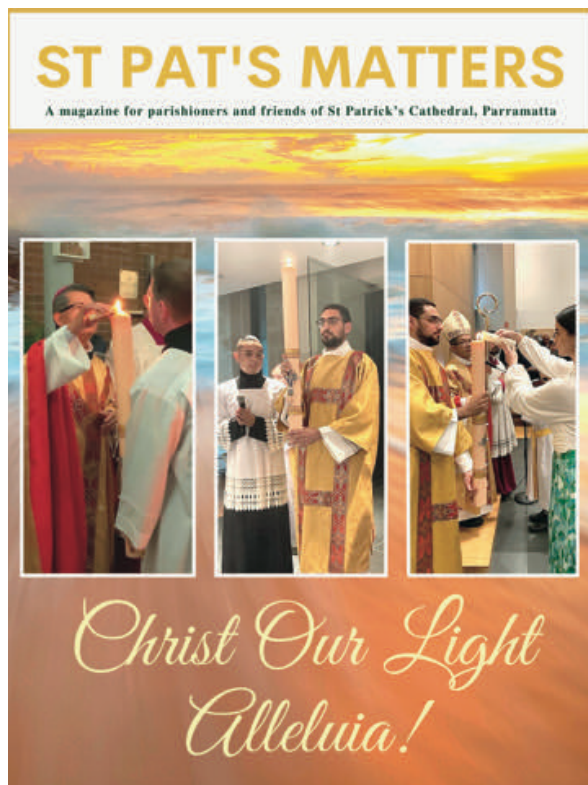
- to build a sense of our identity as a parish community;
- to report on the various liturgical, sacramental and social events that take place at the Cathedral; e.g. the Sacramental Programme, RCIA, Easter Vigil, St Patrick's Day;
- to highlight the good works of individuals in and beyond the Cathedral parish, and of parish groups such as Credo Youth; and
- to revisit St Patrick's long-standing parish history —priests, people and events — and record present-day happenings.

Sourcing Content:

Notices are published in the Sunday Bulletin with requests for submissions, but the most effective method of garnering articles has proven to be directly approaching people to share their stories.

Even looking back now to any of the earlier issues shows how parish life has developed and changed.

May those of future generations in perusing issues of St Pat's Matters in the parish archives gain an appreciation of our era and how we strived to live as true disciples of Jesus.



# FORMATION

Pamela Bain

## SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SRE)

In 2021, once again, Covid interrupted our weekly visits to the Catholic children being educated in the State Schools, so we were looking forward to meeting these children again in 2022. Every week, during school terms, we have 18 SRE's who visit 230 children in the five primary schools and 100 girls at Macarthur Girls High School. We also have four SREs who can fill in a casual class when needed.

Who are we? We are Special Religious Educators - commonly known as Catechists or Scripture Teachers who take the Good News of Jesus Christ to our children in the State Schools. We come from all walks of life, are of all ages and volunteer our time, some of us even take our lunchtime to fulfil our duties.

We had a successful recruitment drive last year and welcomed four new SREs. Unfortunately, during the same time eight people were unable to continue. We are fortunate to have Deacon Matthew join us in our Ministry this year.

Each year we have four meetings during which we consider various matters pertaining to Child Protection, Curriculum and Behaviour Management. In our Term 3 meeting we discussed a new lesson based on 'Laudato si' which has been prepared by the CCD.

The CCD is the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine which oversees all the SREs in the Diocese of Parramatta. It guides us in our personal growth with Reflection Days, Guest Speakers, Curriculum, Management and



# FORMATION

## SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SRE)



Safeguarding Courses and Workshops. Our current Director, Mrs Cecilia Zammit, will soon retire after a long and fruitful Ministry. We thank her for her dedication and wish her a happy retirement. The CCD also celebrates an annual Mass. Several members of our team received awards at last year's Mass, one for 25 years of service (Mary Wehbe) and two others who received the Papal Blessing for having given twenty years of service to the Ministry (Pamela Bain and Mili Lee).

Our thanks go to Father Robert for his keen interest and support of our work. Also, the Office Staff have again been most helpful, and their assistance is very much appreciated. Thank you!

Our Regional Coordinator, Fiona Clarke, is also very supportive and we thank her for always being on hand as a willing guide.

For more details about this Ministry, how it works, and how you could become involved please contact the Parish Office.

Thank you to all our wonderful SREs. Please pray for us and the children we teach that we may continue to be blessed as we help them to a greater and more faith-filled understanding of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God for all our blessings.



# FORMATION

Michael & Marietta Guillema

Our monthly formations were hampered late last year and early this year due to strict Covid restrictions. That meant no formation sessions were conducted during that period. With the easing of the restrictions, we were able to resume last June in time for our annual Pentecost Retreat, with Fr Robert and Annette Hartmann headlining the event.

In July, we started an eight-part series of Bible sessions called *Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible* with Charbel Raish of Parousia Media, running until the end of October. We plan to end this year with a series of Advent Lectio Divina Reflection sessions.

As always, our vision for next year is to continue our monthly formation teachings with new inspiring topics to deepen the faith, nurture parishioners and spread the Good News to others and other parishes.

We thank the Lord for this great blessing to enable us to continue this ministry.



# 38 SOCIAL JUSTICE

Mili Lee



St Patrick's Cathedral parish has always been active in promoting the Catholic Social Teaching within the local community and beyond.

While the pandemic has limited our involvement with various groups that the Cathedral used to support, it has also provided a new opportunity to respond to the current pandemic situation in ways that are crucial to keeping our community safe and cared for.

Since the lockdown in July 2021 due to health restrictions to minimise the spread of COVID-19, the Cathedral's Cloister Function rooms have been a vaccination centre for refugees and the homeless of Parramatta..

Post COVID-19 restriction the Cathedral cloister area continues to be a shelter for various agencies that feed the homeless of Parramatta. We are proud to be working with these groups, most of

whom are not church affiliated, to serve the community of Parramatta

Apart from opening our parish home to the wider community, we are grateful to the Parramatta chapter of the St Vincent de Paul Society for their tireless work in supporting those who knock at our parish door for assistance. Our gratitude to Marilyn and Graham Cook and Terry O'Brien who visit people in need on our behalf..

A new Social Justice group is now starting in the parish with the focus on peace, justice and ecology. It is hoped that the group will animate the parish to live and act justly and stand with the less fortunate of our society.

May our hearts and mind be always open to the will of God. May we not only go to church but be the Church that the Holy Spirit is asking us to be.









ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL  
DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA

1 Marist Place | Parramatta | NSW 2150