



ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

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ABOUT US

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 continues 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

St Patrick's Cathedral

*The Cradle of Australian
Catholicism*



VISION AND MISSION



VISION

As a prayerful and prophetic community, we envision a future where:

- Every member of our community is nurtured and supported in their spiritual journey, constantly growing closer to Christ.
- We take on the mantle of prophets, fearlessly voicing against injustices and standing with the marginalised, embodying the true essence of social justice.
- Our pastoral initiatives, always rooted in love and care, create a safe haven for all, irrespective of their backgrounds or life stories.
- We continuously seek opportunities to empower our faithful, ensuring that every individual feels equipped and encouraged to be a missionary in their own right, spreading the message of Christ's love and the Church's teachings.
- St. Patrick's Parish is recognised not just as a place of worship, but as a hub of community, solidarity, and action against social inequalities.

In all our endeavors, may we always be guided by the Holy Spirit, echoing Christ's message of love, justice, and unity.



MISSION

To be a beacon of faith in Parramatta, St. Patrick's Parish is dedicated to empowering our community through prayer, prophecy, pastoral care, and a profound commitment to social justice. Rooted in our history and driven by the legacy of missionaries, we aim to foster an environment where every faithful feels empowered to act on their beliefs and make a meaningful difference.

OUR TEAM

MILI LEE - MANAGER

INTRODUCTION:

In the heart of our Cathedral parish lies an exceptional team, seamlessly blending spiritual guidance, administration, and creativity. This ensemble, composed of two dedicated priests, a reverent deacon, the steadfast cathedral manager, our director of music, the indefatigable gift shop manager, an efficient secretary, and our welcoming receptionist, is the pulse and rhythm behind our parish's daily operations.

THE YEAR OF COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS:

2023 marked a significant transition for us as we embraced collaborative working more holistically than ever before. Recognizing the modern tools at our disposal, we integrated platforms such as MS Teams for seamless communication, Canva to elevate our outreach materials, and Monday.com to monitor workflow. These integrations not only streamlined our operations but also enhanced the synergy among team members.

BONDING AS ONE FAMILY:

To further nurture our unity, we embarked on a memorable staff retreat this year. A mixture of reflection, strategic planning, and camaraderie, the retreat culminated in a casual staff dinner, allowing everyone to unwind and connect on a personal level. This retreat solidified our belief that our team, while diverse in roles, is united in purpose.

THE HEARTBEAT OF PARISH OPERATIONS:

While our priests and deacon tend to the spiritual needs of the parishioners, the unsung heroes in administrative roles ensure the parish's seamless functioning. Their dedication reflects in everything, from keeping the cathedral's doors open to ensuring that parishioners have the resources they need.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE:

The main objective of our parish office staff is to foster a welcoming, organized, and efficient environment that facilitates spiritual growth and community engagement. They act as the bridge between the spiritual and administrative realms, ensuring that parishioners and visitors experience a sense of belonging, peace, and spiritual fulfillment whenever they step into our parish.

CONCLUSION:

This year has illuminated the true essence of teamwork, where each individual's strengths shine and collectively push us towards our shared goals. As we reflect upon our journey, we are filled with immense gratitude for this wonderful team, who together ensure that our parish remains a beacon of faith, hope, and community.

OUR TEAM

*"United in purpose, diverse in roles:
meet the dedicated souls behind our
parish's daily grace. Together, we
serve, we pray, and we grow."*



MOST REV. VINCENT LONG VAN NGUYEN
Bishop of Parramatta



FR ROBERT RIEDLING
Dean



FR CHRIS DEL ROSARIO
Assistant Priest



REV DAVID DOWLING
Deacon



MILI LEE
Manager



BERNARD KIRKPATRICK
Director of Music



PATRICIA PRECA
Secretary



DONNA MISSIO
Receptionist



MINNIE HARB
Giftshop Manager



FROM THE DEAN

Whether we are speaking about the Church, industry, education or other social institutions, the past few years have been dominated by Covid, a scourge that has caused untold disruption to our lives, now thankfully receding in its severity but still a part of our lives and, it seems, will remain so for some time.

The last two annual reports I have written for our cathedral parish have made mention of Covid and its disruption to the practice of our faith as a community – closed churches, social distancing, mandatory wearing of masks, and so on. It would be impossible, indeed misguided, to have written an annual report over the past couple of years without Covid being up front and centre.

I am pleased to say that whilst Covid has not disappeared entirely from our lives, another theme dominates this year's report and it is a far more positive one: the diocesan synod. This report is being released one month ahead of the diocesan synod and I am happy to say that at this stage the group in charge of organising the listening sessions and the writing up of the document for consideration have made excellent progress.

This report is not the forum for speculating about the outcome of the synod, but I do feel that it is something positive for not only our cathedral parish but for the diocese as a whole. I suspect that my report for next year's AGM will have much to say on how the effects of the synod have reverberated throughout the parish some ten months on from the synod meeting and a few months on from the gathering which is to take place in the middle of 2024. I suspect that it will take a lot longer for the impact of the synod's deliberations to take full effect.

THE DEAN'S REPORT

Effectively, the past twelve months since the last Annual General Meeting have made up the first full year since Covid without any restrictions, the last restrictions being lifted towards the end of February 2022. I feel that after a period of lower numbers attending Mass for some time, the numbers seem to have recovered. Part of the reason for this may well be new families joining the parish, but it is an encouraging sign that normality has largely returned.

As always, specific details of the various ministries are reported on by leaders of those groups in this report, but I would like to give a brief commentary on a few of those areas.

One area of concern that was highlighted to me when I arrived in the parish at the beginning of 2021 was the absence of a group in the parish that was committed to social justice and related issues. The Diocese has a Peace, Justice and Ecology team, underlining the importance that Bishop Vincent places on this aspect of our faith. Of course, Pope Francis has taught us all the value of caring for the environment ("Laudato Si'", for example) but also how important it is to value the dignity of every human being, with particular emphasis on the vulnerable and

poor. Our parish Peace, Justice and Ecology Group (PJE) is small but is looking to be very active and this will be evident with the first major event in November when we will be seeking to host a table-talk forum with some refugees. I look forward to the PJE Group providing a report to the parish at next year's AGM.

One highlight for the parish this year was the reforming of the Friends of St Patrick's Cemetery (FOSPC), a group dedicated to oversight of the historic cemetery in North Parramatta.



THE DEAN'S REPORT

This cemetery is owned by the City of Parramatta. It had become clear that there was much neglect of this historic site, not helped by poor funding, but I am pleased to say that progress has been made both in terms of building up a positive relationship with the City of Parramatta and some improvements to the cemetery, which we hope to be able to build on into next year. I thank the group for their dedication to this vital part of our local history, important not only to the parish but also to the wider community.

Our stewardship program, conducted throughout June, was a moderate success. It focused on parishioners assessing the giving of their time, talent and treasure to the parish to see whether God is calling them to something different or more ambitious in one or more of these areas. We hope to conduct something similar next year. I think it is always good for us to listen to what God is calling us to in our faith life to ensure that we are giving our best. My biggest disappointment in terms of volunteers is that it seems no one wants simply to be a greeter at the doors of the cathedral, welcoming people as they arrive with a smile and a copy of the bulletin, a simple job that requires no great skill. It will be a nice counterbalance to our wonderful hospitality volunteers after our Sunday morning Masses. Perhaps in the near future.

This year was an exciting one for our three World Youth Day pilgrims, Caitlin, Kayleigh and Stacie. I want to thank all the parishioners who supported them prayerfully and practically, enabling us to raise the funds needed to allow these girls to have an amazing faith experience in Europe with fellow young people of faith, an experience which will benefit the parish and the Diocese into the future. I do hope that we can afford the same experience to some more pilgrims when the next World Youth Day takes place in Seoul in 2027.



THE DEAN'S REPORT



One area of parish life that is yet to be revived is the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC). You are aware that the previous PPC could not meet more than a couple of times after I arrived due to the Covid restrictions. During that time the terms of office of the PPC members came to an end. I thank them, albeit belatedly, for their service. I find it interesting that not once since that time has any parishioner come to me and asked me anything about the PPC's existence. This indicates to me that perhaps the PPC needs a "freshening up" and I will be looking into this over the next few months. I hope that a new PPC will be in operation by the end of the summer break.

Other regular aspects of parish life continued along in a positive vein: our prayer and meditation groups, sacramental programs, our wonderful hospitality volunteers, the relationship between parish and schools, our parish shop, Special Religious Education, the running of various major diocesan events, and

so on. We must not neglect to mention to our regular Masses, liturgies and all that makes up life here on a day-to-day basis, supported tirelessly and professionally by our parish staff of Mili, Pat and Donna and our superb choir and organists, led so ably by our Director of Music, Bernard Kirkpatrick, assisted by Eric Grella. A huge thank you too needs to be extended to our numerous volunteers without whom our parish life would be so much poorer and less fruitful. Your dedication is greatly appreciated by all.

Thank you also to Deacon David Dowling and Fr Joseph Nguyen for their ministry and support of the parish, as well as the housekeeping staff who assist in keeping the presbytery in top shape. I must also mention Greg who looks after maintenance, along with Daniel Pace from the Diocese, who both do so much

THE DEAN'S REPORT

work around the precinct. Maintaining the buildings and grounds is work that often goes unseen by many parishioners, yet we all benefit greatly by it. I want to also thank the Diocese for their financial support without which many essential projects would simply not be undertaken.

I thank Bishop Vincent Long and Fr Peter Williams for their support of the parish in so many ways, including regular celebrations of Mass and their invaluable advice.

I finish on a sad note. You are all aware by now that after four and a half years as assistant priest here at St Patrick's Cathedral, Fr Chris del Rosario has been appointed by Bishop Vincent as Administrator of St Thomas Aquinas, Springwood. Whilst this is sad news for us, it is good news for the parishioners of Springwood and an opportunity for Fr Chris to undertake a significant leadership role. I want to thank Fr Chris for his ministry here at the Cathedral and for his friendship since the time of my arrival. His professionalism and genuine love and care for those to whom he ministers bodes well for his new role. We will still see Fr Chris from time to time as he remains the diocesan Master of Ceremonies. We wish Fr Chris well and pray for him as he leaves us. As I write this, I cannot speak of who will replace Fr Chris as assistant priest but have every confidence that he will be a worthy successor to him.

I commend the Annual General Report to you.

With every blessing,

VERY REV ROBERT RIEDLING

DEAN AND ADMINISTRATOR





SRE REPORT

PAMELA BAIN- CORDINATOR

Special Religious Education (SRE) is the time set aside in Government Schools for religious education. Special Religious Educators, also known as Catechists or Scripture Teachers, from St Patrick's Cathedral teach children about building a relationship with Jesus and understanding his message. The need for SRE is paramount as we take the 'good news' of Jesus to about 220 children in five Primary schools and 80 girls at Macarthur Girls High School. As well as Macarthur Girls High School we visit Bayanami Public School, North Parramatta Public School, Parramatta Public School, Parramatta East Public School, and Oatlands Public School. These schools are very welcoming, and their SRE/SEE coordinators are very supportive, and we thank them for their help.

Currently there are twenty SREs teaching each week with the support of three others. Some of these teachers take several classes.

Six SREs left our group at the end of 2022. As a result of our recruitment drive in November, we are blessed with two new teachers. As well as this we had an SRE transfer from the Archdiocese of Sydney and another SRE return after several years away from the ministry.

This year we are having another recruitment drive in September. For us to continue this important Ministry it is vital for us to invite 'new workers into the vineyard.' For our beginning teachers the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) has Training Courses which provide catechists with skills in classroom management and lesson planning, knowledge of the approved curriculum, the bible, and Child Protection, and offers them ways to be creative in the classroom.

At our Diocesan Mass last November, Michael Sobb was rewarded for his twenty years of faithful service with a Papal Blessing. At our regional Mass in May five other SREs received awards for five, ten and fifteen years of service.

We thank Fr Robert and Fr Chris for their continued guidance and spiritual direction.

The Office Staff have been very generous in sharing their time and talents, helping in the continued smooth running of our ministry. Thank you!

Early this year we farewelled Cecilia Zammit, who had been our much-loved CCD director for the last eight years and welcomed Marilyn Hancock, now Head of the CCD.

Our regional Coordinator, Fiona Clarke, has been a source of great support. We thank her for all her interest and concern for all our endeavours.

A big thank you to Marian Polizzi, the editor of St Pat's Matters, who has continued to inform you of our ministry by introducing our new volunteers.

Another big thank you goes to all our wonderful SREs who give so freely and generously of their time.

For more details about our ministry, how it works and how you could become involved please contact the parish office.

Pray for us and the children we teach.



CHILDREN'S LITURGY

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KIRRILY MCDERMOTT- CORDINATOR

At St. Patrick's Cathedral Parish, our Children's Liturgy program has been running during 9:30am Mass for nearly 30 years. In the mid 1990s, one of our Cathedral mums, Lina Nicholas approached the then Dean, Fr John Boyle, to ask why this ministry didn't exist at St Patrick's. Fr John said it didn't exist because it needed someone to start it! So, with his blessing, Lina and a small group of pioneering parishioners began this weekly ministry to children at the 9.30am Mass.

Fast forward to 2023, Children's Liturgy continues to be offered to a new generation of children at the Cathedral. On average, around 15-30 children will attend each week, but sometimes we have over 50! While the volunteers supporting this ministry have changed over the past 30 years, the mission of the program remains the same. We seek to ensure our youngest parishioners (and their families) are actively welcomed into our parish and have a nurturing space where they can engage with the Word of God and grow in their faith.

What is Children's Liturgy?

Children's Liturgy refers to the practice of offering a separate, age-appropriate Liturgy of the Word for young children (primary school aged) during Sunday Mass. At the Cathedral, we offer Children's Liturgy every Sunday during school term time (around 40 weeks of the year). At the start of Mass, the children are invited to process in with the priests and servers. The children then receive a special blessing before they are led to the Parish hall, where a special liturgy space has been set up for them. The children sit down, we turn on our LED candle, and then guide the children through a simplified introductory rite and proclamation of the Gospel.

After proclaiming the Gospel, there is time for a short "homily" that is age-appropriate and engaging. Sometimes, this might involve re-enacting the Gospel or inviting the children through a guided discussion about what they have heard. We then follow by praying the



Apostles' Creed together and Prayers of Intercession. Some of the older children are able to lead these prayers. To conclude, we usually complete a simple craft that reinforces the Gospel message we have heard and provides the children with something to take home. This is a good way for children to have a tangible "prompt" to continue faith discussions at home. After a prayer of dismissal, the children are then led back to the Church where they are involved in the Presentation of the Gifts. The children then return to their family so they can participate in the Liturgy of their Eucharist.

While parents often appreciate Children's Liturgy as they can enjoy listening to the homily without the distraction of a wriggling child, it is important to note that children's liturgy isn't "time out" from the liturgy or babysitting. Children's Liturgy is liturgy. At the Cathedral, our program is informed by the Guidelines for Children's Liturgy published by the Diocese of Parramatta's Office of Worship. These Guidelines provide a broad framework for Children's Liturgy in parishes and reinforce that Children's Liturgy should always mirror what is happening at Mass in structure, content, and symbol. Likewise, the role of the Children's Liturgy leader is not to exclusively "teach" the children, but rather to facilitate an experience of liturgy that is

sensitive to the developmental needs of children and how they learn and grow in faith. It is a true privilege to guide our youngest parishioners in this liturgy, and we are always so amazed by their reverence, knowledge and wisdom. In so many ways, we learn from the children! "And he said 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.'" Matthew 18:3

Children's Liturgy Team

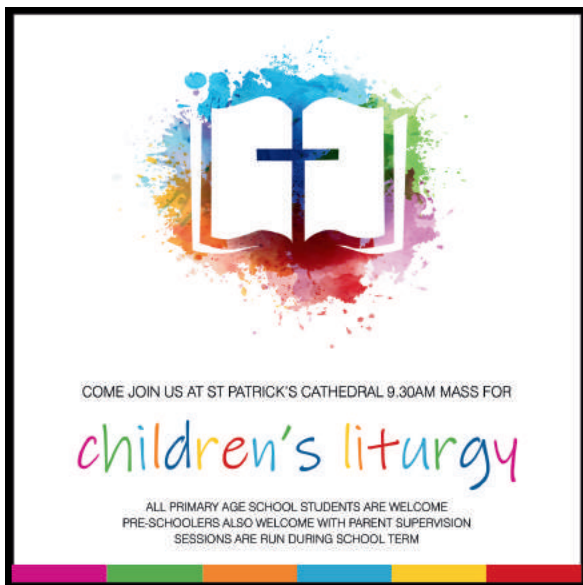
Children's Liturgy at the Cathedral would not be possible without the dedicated team of volunteers who run this ministry over 40 weeks of the year. During 2022/23, we had 9 "teams" of presenters:

- Jessie Sebarthanam and Paula Meli
- Claire and Stephen Pospischil
- Marilyn and Graham Cook
- Edward Safardi and Ros Anjaly Jose
- Grace Bondoc and Sarah Cook
- Danielle and Mitchell Fleming
- Kaz Malek and Helena Roumanas
- Sophia and Charlie Malek
- Kirrily Aguilera and Paula Meli

CHILDREN'S LITURGY REPORT

Some highlights this year include:

- The creation of a beautiful new Children's Liturgy flyer by Kaz, which is being used to promote Children's Liturgy in our primary school newsletter and parish Facebook page. Please share it with your friends!



- The transition to using AV slides within our Children's Liturgies. A big thank you to Sophia, who was the catalyst for this change and who created an initial template for our group to use. Over the next three-year cycle, we are hoping to move our entire program into more engaging slide presentations.



- Presenting a workshop on Children's Liturgy at the recent Diocesan Liturgy Conference. In July, I was invited to present two workshops on how we run Children's Liturgy at the Cathedral to others from the Diocese of Parramatta who were interested in setting up this ministry within their parish. It was a great blessing to be able to share the insights and wisdom from our Cathedral parish team with parishes just starting out.



- Our Children's Liturgy team also meets at least twice a year for a catch-up dinner. This is a good opportunity for us to grow in fellowship and share our knowledge and experience of ministry with each other. It is wonderful to have Fr Robert join us for these dinners.

A big thank you to Fr. Robert and Fr. Chris, who are always so supportive of our Children's Liturgy program and give us so much encouragement in this ministry. Without their commitment, Children's Liturgy simply would not run. We all feel very blessed to be a part of this vibrant ministry which is such an important way we build up a welcoming culture at the Cathedral Parish. If you would like to join our team, please get in touch!



YOUTH MINISTRY IN PIC



MUSIC MINISTRY

BERNARD KIRKPATRICK- DIRECTOR

With the Covid pandemic disruptions of the previous two years having passed, the 2022-2023 year has seen a return to normality in the life of the cathedral, and so too, the music ministry has resumed its regular schedule of liturgical services.

The role of the cathedral music ministry team continues to be one of supporting the liturgy and worship through musical leadership, support for congregational “full, active and conscious participation” and embellishment through the performance of sacred music, both old and new. Such are the duties of the music ministry which are outlined in the church’s ritual books and liturgical documents both pre- and post Vatican II. Of particular significance in 2023 is the document “Sacrosanctum Concilium” (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) which celebrates the 60th year of its promulgation. This document established the provision for the revision of the sacred rites and established aims and objectives that, in summary, would see ritual and music ensure that Word and Sacrament are celebrated with beauty, in “noble simplicity”, such that it nurtures and sustains the faithful in order to live out a fulfilled Christian life. In a busy cathedral church, such a heavy mandate requires a significant commitment from our liturgical ministers, and in particular a strong and ongoing dedication from our many music ministers, including organists, cantors and cathedral choir.



MUSIC MINISTRY

St. Patrick's is blessed to have a well-established and regular team of musicians who serve at the Sunday Masses of 6:00pm Vigil, 9:30am, 11:00am Solemn Sung Mass and 6:00pm evening. In addition, there are Solemnities of the Lord celebrated during the year at 12.30pm weekday Mass and the evening Solemn Masses for Ash Wednesday, Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary and the Commemoration of All Souls as well as diocesan occasions, weddings, funerals and other liturgical events such as the celebration of the Office of Tenebrae (during Holy Week), and Solemn Vespers (sung Evening Prayer of the Church). All of these liturgies require music and thus a significant level of commitment, preparation, time and talent on the part of the musicians.

Currently the team of music ministers at St. Patrick's is led by Director of Music, Bernard Kirkpatrick, and Assistant Director of Music, Eric Grella. Eric's position has also been combined with a diocesan position of "Music Formation Minister" within the "MET" (Youth Ministry & Evangelisation Team). In 2022, Patrick Newman was appointed Cathedral Organist after successfully gaining the Associate Diploma in Music (A.Mus.A) through the AMEB. Mr. Michael Taylor continues in the role of Assistant Organist. Cantors leading the music at weekly scheduled liturgies number approximately eight male and female voices. Administrative support and Librarian duties are provided by Samuel Verceluz and Stephen Smith.





St. Patrick's Cathedral Choir has SATB membership of approximately 32 mixed male/female voices – with 16 choral positions providing scholarship opportunities for young catholic musicians to learn the skills of a liturgical musician. A successful social media campaign via the choir's Facebook page and Instagram saw a number of new members join in 2022, including three who are students at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music (Majors in Voice, Opera studies, and Composition). Junior chorister, Caitlin Bernardo was also selected as one of the cathedral parish World Youth Day pilgrims. Membership requires obligatory attendance at weekly choir rehearsal each Wednesday and attendance at the Solemn Mass each Sunday and as scheduled. The role of the choir takes on a particularly important and heavy commitment and enables the cathedral to maintain the tradition of a Solemn Mass each Sunday (11:00am), provide musical support for major diocesan occasions such as Ordinations and formal Ceremonies of the Bishop of Parramatta, as well as modelling good liturgical praxis for the diocese.

Music collaboration continues with RCIA ministry and St. Patrick's Primary School in First Holy Communion Masses and Confirmations, as does our interaction with the Diocesan Performing Arts Unit – "Captivate" - collaborating with young musicians from around the diocese to integrate liturgical music with the instrumental and performance skills they are developing through this unique Catholic Schools Parramatta

educational program. The establishment of "Music Formation Minister" within the Youth Ministry MET team, and the appointment of Eric Grella to this position will hopefully establish plans for further youth music participation with the cathedral in the future.

For all those involved in the cathedral music ministry team preparation and performance of the music requires reflection on our mission and purpose, and leads to a deeper spiritual engagement through the sacred texts and scripture which are the centre of all our musical endeavours. Being able to contribute our time and talent through the particular involvement in the liturgical life of the cathedral and leading music for worship brings a great deal of personal satisfaction and the joy of many blessings.

Some Significant Events of the last year include:

- 08 August 2022: Diocesan Awards Vespers (St. Mary MacKillop)
- October 2022: Cathedral hosts the 2023 Sydney Organ Competition
- 02 November 2022: All Souls Day: Solemn Requiem Mass with families of the deceased buried from the cathedral during that year attending.
- 10 December 2022: Ordinations to the Diaconate
- 02 February 2023: Ordination to Priesthood of Rev Matthew Dimian
- 05 February 2023: "Red Mass" for the opening of the 2023 Legal Year.

MUSIC MINISTRY

- Induction and Welcome of Principals of Parramatta Catholic Schools
- Bishop of Parramatta Student Excellence awards (Vespers with Captivate)
- Holy Week Liturgies – especially “Tenebrae” – psalm singing, scripture reflection and choir responsories
- Orchestral Masses for Christmas Day & Easter Sunday
- Commissioning of Liturgical Ministers
- 125th Anniversary of the Cathedral’s 1898 Norman & Beard Pipe Organ
- New Mass composed for and premiered by Cathedral choir by Adriel Sukumar
- Revamped design of cathedral Liturgy Guide into Bulletin

Concert Events:

- Brandenburg Orchestra & Choir “Noel, Noel!” concert
- River City Voices choir concert
- Chamber Philharmonic Cologne
- Sydney Candle Light Concerts

As Music Director, I extend my thanks to all who assist in the music ministry at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Parramatta. In particular, I thank Bishop Vincent Long van Nguyen, Dean Robert Riedling and clergy of the parish for the continuing support they provide in presiding at liturgy. Special thanks to all of the parishioners of the cathedral who so warmly embrace all our music ministers and who enthusiastically participate in the assembly’s music, as we all give glory to God and bless his holy name.



FORMATION

MARIETTA & MICHAEL GULEMA- CORDINATORS

We thank the Lord again for St Patrick's Cathedral parish for its continued support of the formation teachings promoting our parish evangelisation and renewal program.

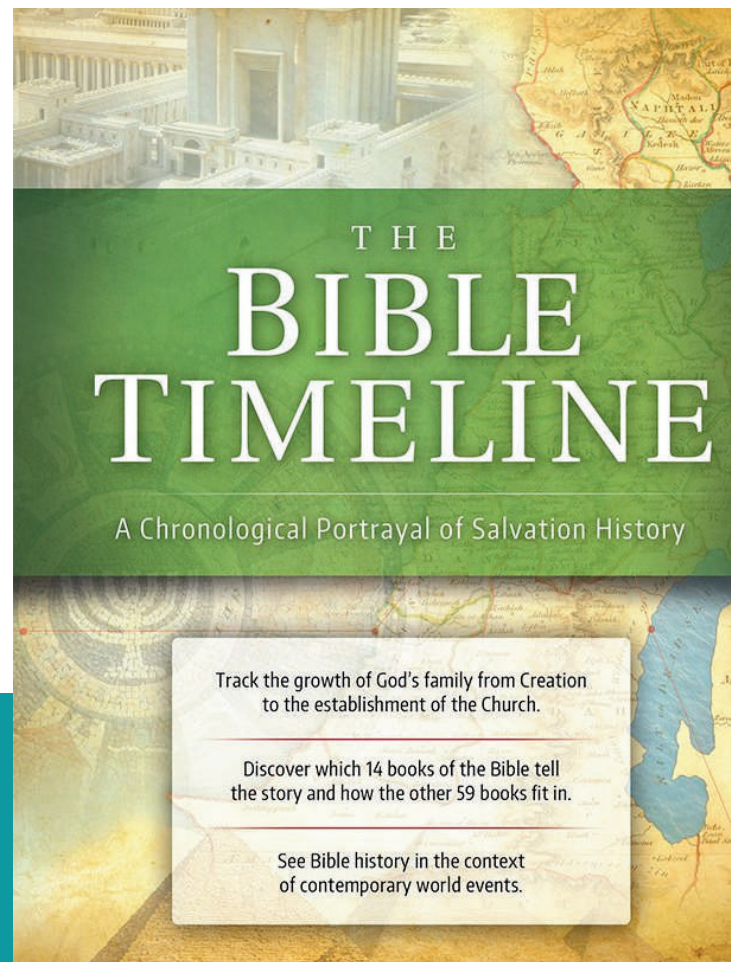
Our formation sessions last year concluded from July to October with eight Bible Study sessions called "Unlocking of the Mystery of the Bible." This was in collaboration with Charbel Raish of Parousia Media. In these sessions, Charbel Raish presented and helped participants uncover the story woven throughout Scripture, enabling everyone to get the "big picture" of the Bible and understand what it is all about.

Our collaboration with Charbel Raish of Parousia Media continued in this year's five Lenten Reflection Sessions called "No Greater Love – a Biblical walk-through Christ's Passion." The sessions took each participant through a Biblical walk step-by-step with Jesus from the garden of Gethsemane to Mount Calvary. Every step of the way, Old Testament prophecies, messianic expectations, biblical symbolism, and historical context helped shed light on the mystery of Christ's suffering and death.

We held our annual Pentecost Retreat in May, with Fr Robert Riedling and Annette Hartmann headlining the event. Fr. Robert gave an

excellent overview of the Paramatta Diocesan Synod 2023 and, more importantly, explained how each baptised Catholic can help shape the local Church's future. Annette concluded the retreat with an extensive presentation on the Liturgical Bible Readings on Pentecost day.

For the rest of the year, Fr. Robert approved to proceed in conducting twenty-four sessions of Bible Timeline Study starting from June till December. This study program aims to



FORMATION

provide participants with a guided journey through salvation history and introduce the beautiful narrative of the Scripture in a way that will hopefully transform each participant's lives.

As always, our vision for next year is to continue our monthly formation teachings with new inspiring topics and collaborations to deepen the faith, nurture parishioners and spread the good news to others.

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

God Bless.



HOSPITALITY

MARIAN POLIZZI - COORDINATOR

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

This motto has motivated members of the Hospitality Group since formation in 1995, when its ministry outreach began — serving morning tea to parishioners and visitors on Sunday Mornings after 9:30am and 11:00am Masses — the year 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, but most importantly 'kept on keeping on'.

Over that span of 28 years, our venues have included

- Pre the 1995 fire, the old, but beautiful, parish hall that stood behind Murphy House;
- the Grotto Café operating out of the old Marist School block (now the carpark) while Mass took place in the Pro-Cathedral (the 2-storey Marist High School, where the new cathedral building now stands), before demolition began to make way for the construction of the new Cathedral precinct;
- then, offsite, during the rebuilding of our spiritual home, at St Pat's in the Field, in the grounds of Cumberland Hospital, Fleet Street, Parramatta. The church was in a hall with an adjoining room for social gatherings; and 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.



HOSPITALITY

ABOUT US

The team currently comprises 43 members. The breakdown of current volunteers, being

- 32 women and 11 men:
which breaks down into
6 married couples
23 women and 5 men,
and one mother and daughter

During the year we lost three recent recruits — one married couple and a young girl — due to their relocation to new parishes, plus a long-serving member who, regrettably, had to resign due to family commitments.

WE ARE ONE IN THE LORD.

Worthy of note is the multicultural make-up of the Hospitality Group. Over the years, people from so many different countries — Argentina, Bangladesh, Croatia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Lebanon, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Peru, the Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Spain, Tonga, Uganda, Uruguay, and 'OZ' — have served as one for love of God and the parish community. Surely that gives us the right to proudly proclaim we are like the United Nations!

COMMENTS ON OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

- Members are rostered once a month.
- Post COVID-19 the people on duty have continued to serve the food and beverages.
- Team members volunteered assistance at special parish events e.g. fundraising barbecues for our WYD pilgrims, at Fr Chris del Rosario's 30th birthday celebration, and on occasion at Diocesan events.

- The ongoing generosity of parishioners buying supplies, bringing home made cakes etc and giving cash donations has meant reliance on parish funds to run the café is almost nil.
- Posters seeking volunteers will be put up in the café; members will continue to recruitment by approaching people personally during Morning Tea; and occasional notices will be placed in the Sunday Bulletin.

LOOKING FORWARD

RE: WELCOME to ST PAT'S MORNING TEA

In June last year, a 'special morning tea was initiated on the first Sunday of the month to welcome new parishioners to St Pat's. Regrettably it did not achieve the outcome



hoped for. Personal invitations were emailed to newcomers and notices posted in the Sunday Bulletin, but the problem was how to recognise the newcomers when they arrived at the café.

To review the situation meetings will be held to discuss:

1. The best strategies to employ, invitation-wise, to get new parishioners to come to the café.
2. The possibility of having a designated person at the café entrance to act as an official Welcomer.
3. Provision of labels to make temporary name tags (could also be made available for regulars).
4. Any other suggestions to achieve a successful outcome for this proposed initiative.

RE: WELCOMERS at SUNDAY MASSES

Prior to the pandemic, having welcomers at Sunday Masses was moderately successful. Unfortunately the promise to reinvigorate the ministry post COVID did not materialise. In the June Stewardship Campaign, being a Welcomer was one of the suggestions for giving of talent and time to the parish family.

This struck a chord with Hospitality member Cora Mercado, so we have briefly discussed the intention of starting the ball rolling again. The first move will be to advise Fr Robert of our plan and set up a meeting inviting parishioners to come for a round table discussion on how to proceed with amassing a plethora of volunteers!

Many Hospitality Group members have been long-time volunteers in this essential ministry outreach and just might be eligible for long service — but definitely not for retirement! As the coordinator, I am truly grateful for their years of selfless dedication and continuing commitment.



HOSPITALITY

Pat Tenido and Dorothy Soh fall into that category and can lay claim to the longest tenure of service. They look back over their years of involvement since the late 1990s.

FROM PAT TENIDO

People come and go and change is constant, but that doesn't apply to me. I joined the parish's Hospitality Team not long after its formation back in the 1990s. During those early days as a St Patrick's Cathedral parishioner, I wasn't involved in any church ministry (although deep inside I was longing to share my faith by being involved in church activities in some way.)

I was just happy to attend Mass regularly, preferring to sit at the back, too shy to communicate with people I didn't know. My routine was to arrive at the church when Mass was just about to start and go home after the celebration without engaging with anyone in anyway.

One Sunday however, my routine changed. A beautiful lady named Marian Polizzi approached me and asked me if I would like to join the Hospitality Team. (I am not sure if it was called the Hospitality Team back then). I think it was called the Morning Tea Group. I told Marian that I was happy to be part of the group.

Morning Tea was held in the 'Grotto'. Water was fetched from a nearby tap at the back of the original hall (pre the 1996 fire). There was a portable urn for hot water. Coffee, tea, biscuits and other goodies were served.

When St Pat's moved to "The Fields" during the rebuilding of the Cathedral, I followed. The Morning Tea Group's numbers increased. We continued serving tea and coffee from a room situated on the side of the hall that served as our church. People were able to take their

refreshments out into the spacious grounds around the building.

Why have I lasted so long in this ministry? I find joy in serving and helping others. I have met a lot of people, some of whom have become my life-long friends. What is involved is not very hard or time-consuming. There is a lot of cooperation, give and take, joy and laughter.

I've been part of the Hospitality Team for more than two decades now, and I have no intention of slowing down or giving it up. This ministry is a worthwhile initiative of the parish. It builds community, uniting the members of the parish. It gives parishioners the chance to gather socially, meet newcomers and engage in pleasant conversation over a cup of tea or coffee. Visitors to the parish are always made to feel welcome.

Members of the Hospitality Team and parishioners sometimes share their cooking skills through the delicious goodies they bring. I feel proud to be part of this worthwhile service to the community and I have no intention of giving it up.



FROM DOROTHY SOH

I started attending Mass at St Patrick's when I moved to Parramatta just after the old Cathedral had been destroyed by fire in February 1996.

The first person I met was Marian Polizzi as she was handing out the parish bulletin before Mass, which was being held in the Pro-Cathedral, (the former Marist School). Marian and her husband Baldo have remained my closest friends ever since.

I can't remember how the Hospitality Team started at St Pat's – but Marian "recruited" me to the team, which then not only organized the morning teas after the 9.30am and 11am Sunday Masses, but also helped organize the annual Christmas parties and St Patrick's Day. Among the original Hospitality team were Marian, Yvonne Malouf, Joan Pertel, Dorothy and John Green, myself, and others.

Before the Cathedral was rebuilt, we didn't have the "luxurious" setting of the Cloister Café for morning teas that we enjoy today. Instead, morning teas were held in the cramped room in the old Marist Block, (now the front area of the car park). Despite that, parishioners still came for a cuppa after Mass, because they could spill out into the grassed area fronting Victoria Road. That's why it was called The Grotto Café. The water had been disconnected, so it was a Jack and Jill scenario for those on duty to fetch water in buckets from a tap at the back of the then Parish Hall. The water was heated in an urn for making the tea and coffee, as well as for washing up in a dish!

Then while the Cathedral was being re-built, the parish moved to temporary premises in the Cumberland Hospital site in Fleet Street. A hall in the grounds became our place of worship. We weren't daunted by being located next to Parramatta Gaol, as there was a spacious meeting

room off the 'church' and a proper kitchen with running water! Morning tea could be enjoyed in the room or alfresco in the pleasant park-like surroundings.

Returning home to the new cathedral in 2003 was exciting. The new Parish Hall had impressive kitchen facilities, a large indoor area and cloister area outside for people to mix and mingle with their refreshments .

We have an excellent Hospitality Team and I encourage other parishioners to volunteer to be of service to the parish community. In doing so you will be rewarded as I have been, making long-lasting friendships and considering team members like a family, supporting and helping each other.

President John F Kennedy famously quoted, "Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country" I've taken the liberty of tweaking it, by saying, "Ask not what your parish can do for you – ask what you can do for your parish."

FINAL WORDS

As co-ordinator, I unreservedly assure St Pat's parish community, that the group's members dispense hospitality with our team motto ever upper-most in their minds. And in our service we also take to heart St Mary of the Cross MacKillop's counsel to her sisters:

**"FIND HAPPINESS IN MAKING
OTHERS HAPPY."**



SENIOR'S MINISTRY PHOTO GALLERY



ST PAT'S MATTERS

MARIAN POLIZZI - EDITOR

The magazine is now in its 27th year of publication. How far it's progressed! From its humble beginnings back in March 1997, with the blessing of Fr John Boyle, then Cathedral Dean, to the present time with 116 issues having been published.

The first issue called Parramatters was one A4 sheet printed on both sides in black and white, without pictures. With issue 2 came a name change to St Pat's Matters, which proved to be more appropriate and relevant to our Cathedral.

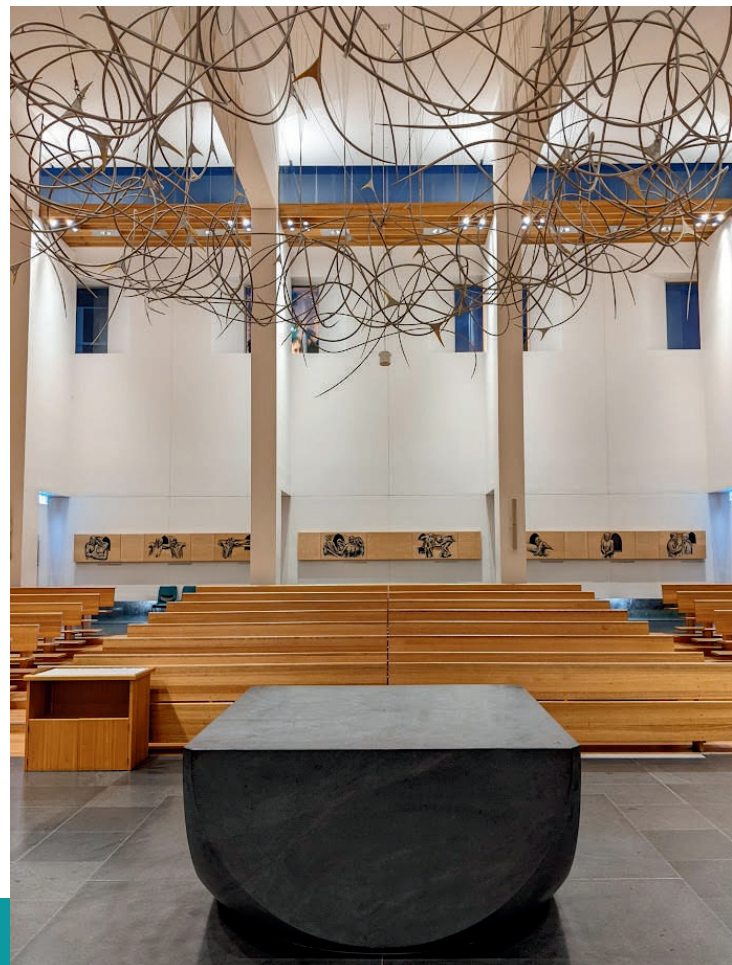
Over the 27 years of its existence the publication's size gradually increased; it has gone from monotone to colour print; it has evolved from being called a parish newsletter to 'a magazine for parishioners and friends of St Patrick's Cathedral Parish.'

Credit is due to the incredibly gifted office manager, Mili Lee, for attaining the standard of today's glossy, professional-looking 24 page issues produced inhouse. Her computer expertise and knowledge and graphic design ability is prodigious and she constantly strives for excellence in all matters pertaining to the magazine's presentation, especially with the design of its cover. Since the 2022 Annual Report, Issues 112 to 116 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, (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults), Holy Week and Easter Vigil, St Patrick's Day, the Red Mass and Seniors gatherings, Volunteer Thank-You Dinners;



ST PAT'S MATTERS

- to encourage parishioners to write about their involvement in ministry as Acolytes, Altar Servers, Readers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Choristers, Musicians, Special Religious Educators, Leaders in Children's Liturgy, Hospitality, Visitation to the Sick;
- to highlight the good works of individuals in and beyond the Cathedral parish, and of parish groups e.g. Credo Youth and Presenters of Faith Formation sessions;
- to revisit the parish's long-standing history — to shine a light on the priests, people and events now inhabiting the archival records of St Patrick's past.

SOURCING CONTENT

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

Looking back now to any of the earlier issues shows how parish life has changed and developed over the years.

May those of future generations, through perusing issues of St Pat's Matters in the parish archives, gain an appreciation of the eras that have preceded them and how parishioners of past times strived to live as faithful disciples of Jesus.

ST PAT'S STORY MATTERS



BELL RINGERS

THOMAS PERIN - TOWER LEADER

Regular Sunday ringing on the peal of bells continues on the second Sunday of each month, normally prior to the 11:00am Solemn Mass, and we are increasingly able to accompany other services as the band gradually grows. Practice sessions, which are held on Wednesday evenings from 6pm, are well attended and often attract visitors from other bell towers across Sydney. Encouragingly, the ringers at St Patrick's are now also regularly joining other practices, which both aids in their learning and supports the broader bellringing fraternity.

From a technical standpoint, the local ringers are advancing well, with several of them regularly practicing method ringing (a systematic way of generating changing sequences of bells) which is always a big challenge! This culminated recently in two locally trained women ringing their first quarter peal; a 45 minute set piece of method ringing and a great achievement. We look forward to several more 'firsts' in the coming 12 months.

Modest goals for the next year also include: increasing our frequency of Sunday ringing, continuing to teach new starters, and undertaking a little routine maintenance of the installation.

It is always encouraging to see bands grow and develop, and I enjoy greatly my small role in making this happen.



ST VINCENT DE PAUL

GRAHAM & MARILYN COOK - COORDINATORS

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a well known institution in Australia and we continue to provide much needed assistance to the underprivileged people in our community.

Just in case you are wondering what this means following is a precis of recent client cases. We provide a home visit option, carried out by the volunteer team at the Parish, as well as a drop-in centre at Harris Park where clients can attend if that is possible. We work collaboratively to provide the best service we can to families that mostly have immediate and severe needs.

- We provide food assistance when the family budget is stretched.
- We provide clothing vouchers to attend the Vinnies Shop – this could be for winter clothing or some office attire to attend a job interview.
- We provide assistance with rental arrears when the budget has been stretched too far.
- Many families are supporting children who have special needs - many have serious medical conditions.
- A number of families have experienced domestic violence and have ongoing stresses as a result.
- We provide basic furnishings to help people assimilate back into independent living after hospitalisation, incarceration, or other forms of assisted living. Providing hope to people in these circumstances is vitally important to their successful transition to independent living.
- We provide a social contact for people who need someone to talk to. We listen to their problems and react in a caring and non-judgmental manner.
- We provide hampers for families in need at Christmas time to make it a special time for them and to show that they are cared for.
- We provide assistance for people to relocate to a better living situation.
- We co-operate with other organisations to provide support for families in changing circumstances.
- We refer people to other agencies to provide extra support - looking for employment, financial counselling, legal assistance, coping with needs and stresses of a new baby in the family.



The assistance we provide to the families in Parramatta and surrounding areas is in total accord with the Christian ethos of caring for your neighbour and assisting those in need. We are very proud to be able to assist in this way, and we very much appreciate any support to assist us in this mission.

Finally, we were thrilled to attend a morning tea recently at the Amelie Housing Project in Merrylands (a social Housing project – 73 units built on the old St Vincent de Paul shop site in Merrylands - partly funded by St Vincent de Paul). At this event we had the opportunity (post Covid) to talk with some of the residents who now have a very comfortable home after a life of uncertainty. This is a fantastic example of how housing can change lives and create a sense of community and settlement for families.

Vinnies has a very strong social justice agenda and we have been involved in and/or supported several political campaigns to encourage Governments to facilitate the provision of homes for families in need. The gap of need versus demand is just enormous and if anything is getting worse. This is a vitally important aspect of our social justice platform. The need in the community is critical.

Consequently it is important to know that any donation that you make to St Vincent de Paul will be put to a worthwhile use to help vulnerable and needy people in our community.

**“GO TO THE POOR:
YOU WILL FIND GOD.”**

~St Vincent de Paul~

ST PAT'S CEMETERY COMMITTEE

JUDITH DUNN - HISTORIAN

St Patricks Cemetery encapsulates and reflects the character of the growing town of Parramatta, giving us a picture of how the town was developing through time. It shows the people, their nationalities, local work trends, prosperity and poverty. Yet most of us seldom think of those pioneer members of the Catholic Church who were lovingly laid to rest in our own "God's Acre."

The site is important for its aesthetic, scientific, social and historic values for the past, present and future. Aesthetic Value meaning the colour and texture of materials and fabric, the stone locally quarried and shaped and how it settles into the landscape as it becomes covered with a variety of coloured lichens. Scientific Value meaning the research, rarity and quality of data. Burial registers hand written by a succession of priests sometimes including subjective notes about a person that illuminates a little of their life. Historical Value embraces the stories of all those buried within, ranging from bathos to pathos. Innkeepers, Mayors, priests, convicts, a racecourse owner and an Inspector of Nuisances. The memorials date from 1822, the earliest Catholic Cemetery in Australia and the oldest mortuary chapel from 1844. Social Value means the focus of our spiritual and cultural sentiment. Biblical verses and cautionary verse, the line of funeral cypress leading to the chapel whose very windows and door point to heaven with their gothic arches. The surprising number of countries from which these people came, mainly Irish but also from Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland, China and a few local Aboriginal people.

Realising the importance of the site I researched and published a comprehensive book, The Parramatta Cemeteries, St Patricks in 1988. After this event a St Patricks Cemetery Committee was formed which raised finances and attended to the repair of every memorial between the chapel and Pennant Hills Road, re-roofing the chapel and making sure road works did not impact on the original cemetery grant. A sesquicentenary celebration was held in 1972. After this work there was a gradual demise of the group and it disbanded.

For the last 35 years I have kept a watching eye on the cemetery, cleaning the chapel and raising concerns with City of Parramatta Council (CoP) who owns the site. More recently, cemetery maintenance has changed, weeds abound, the homeless and drug users moved in. With the major collapse of a large vault, severe flooding of the chapel, overgrowth of vegetation, someone living at the chapel and a major dump of rubbish showed it was time to recreate the Friends of St Patricks Cemetery. One person can only do so much and there was so much to be done! A number of articles in St Pats Matters helped raise the cemetery profile. After discussions with Father Robert, a proposal to form a new committee was placed in the bulletin for three weeks with the date set for a meeting, where a gratifying number of interested people came forward. A subsequent walk through the cemetery to understand the issues was well attended. Everyone was shocked by general neglect, a heavy invasion of

ST PAT'S CEMETERY COMMITTEE



native flax, a long dead tree threatening to fall on headstones, indications of flooding around the chapel and the collapsed vault made it an easy decision to go ahead and form a committee to oversee much needed works. It is intended to inform CoP that the site is cared about and has great meaning to the local and wider Catholic community, to apprise them of perceived issues, to urge major works be progressed and to assist with working bees. A further walk in the cemetery with the contractor tasked with its maintenance, was productive and since then a greater area of mowing has commenced, the dead tree removed and some hand weeding of flax and Agapanthus removed 16 bags of green waste.

On Wednesday 16 August the group was formalised by electing an executive committee, the results being, President Robert Edgar, Vice President Judith Dunn, Secretary Paul Carson and Treasurer Kerima-Gae Topp. All other enthusiastic attendees became committee members for which there is no set number.

We would welcome anyone to join the committee who is keen and interested, has some spare time and is willing to assist with this important work.

Since our formation we have had another walk through the cemetery, listing memorials needing repair and ranking them in order of priority to be forwarded to CoP for their repair schedule. Quotes have been obtained for pressing repairs to the collapsed vault and the chapel and a watching eye by everyone on the committee, now informs CoP promptly when rubbish is dumped. We need to obtain grants for specific tasks and working bees will be scheduled.

For the many Catholics buried in this place, who came from a surprisingly disparate number of countries and who in the early days suffered for their faith, who yearned for the comfort of their religion when alive and the peace of their own "God's Acre" when dead, the preservation and protection of this historic cemetery is no more than they deserve.

FINANCE REPORT

ALFIE RAMIREZ - DIOCESAN ACCOUNTS TEAM

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Under Canon Law, each parish is mandated to establish a Parish Finance Committee (PFC). This committee serves to support the parish priest in managing the parish's resources effectively. At its core, the PFC acts in a consultative capacity and convenes roughly five times annually.

Our current PFC team comprises:

Fr Robert Riedling (Dean)

Fr Chris del Rosario

Mr Sabu Thomas (Member)

Ms Cathy Dearie (Member)

Ms Debbie Grigson (Chair)

Ms Mili Lee (Ex officio - Parish)

Mr Alfie Ramirez (Ex officio - Diocese)

Fr Riedling, as Cathedral Dean, oversees the parish's financial matters—a responsibility entrusted by the Bishop. For the daily financial operations, such

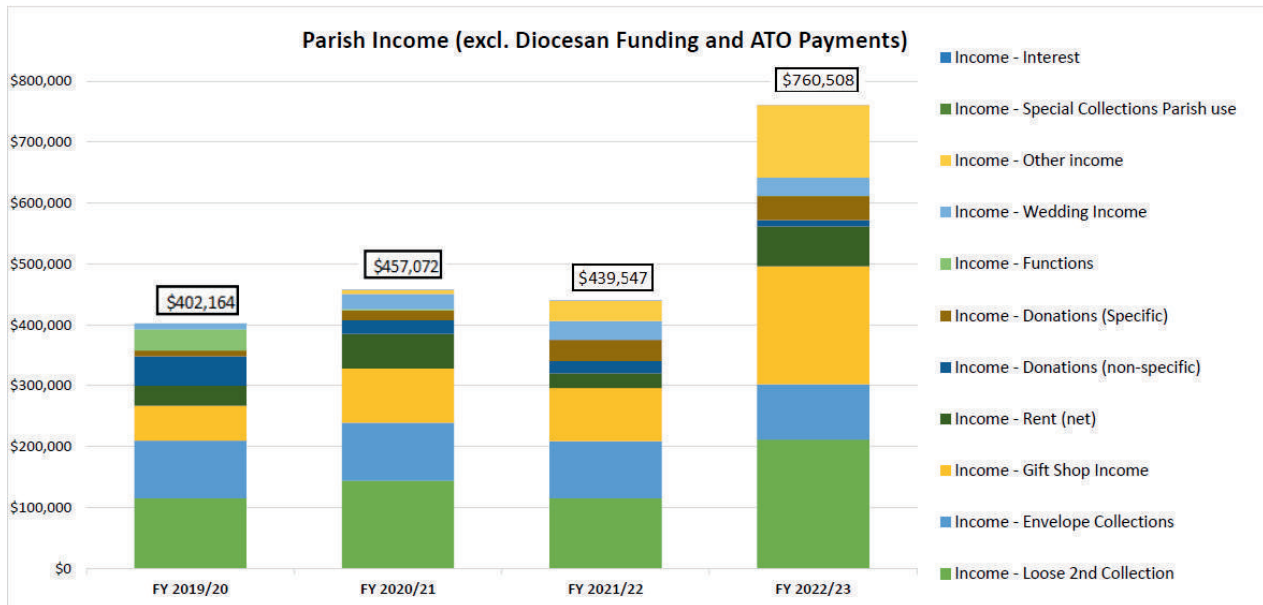
as record-keeping and financial transactions, the Chancery supplies the requisite professional expertise. They collaborate closely with both the Dean and the Cathedral Parish Manager. In this framework, a special acknowledgment goes to Mr Alfie Ramirez, our dedicated Financial Administrator.

This year, we bid adieu to Mrs. Margery Jackman. During her tenure on the PFC, she provided significant contributions, notably serving as the Chair for the majority of her time with us.

The PFC recognises the myriad challenges our parishioners encounter, both personally and economically. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who, despite these challenges, continues to generously support our parish. Your unwavering faith and contributions are the lifeblood of our community.

PARISH INCOME

Key Trends



73%

Income (excl. Diocesan Funding & ATO Payments) increased by 73% compared to FY 2021/22 levels.

The primary reasons were:



\$97k higher loose 2nd collections compared to FY 21/22

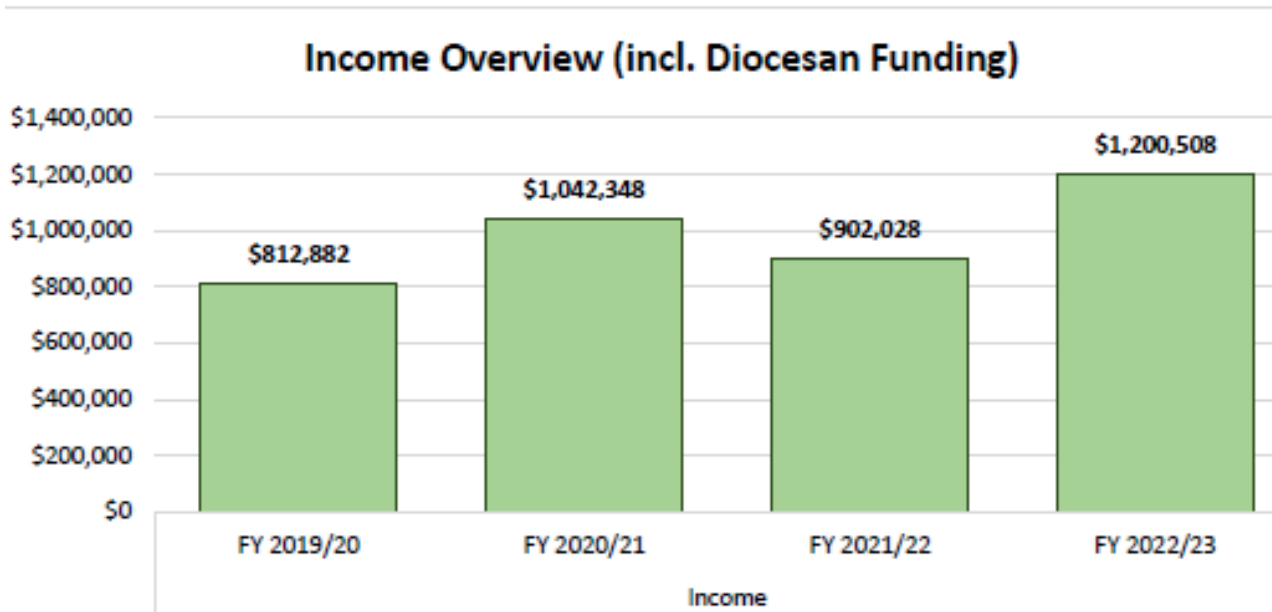


\$107k higher gift shop income compared to FY 21/22



\$41k higher rental income compared to FY 21/22

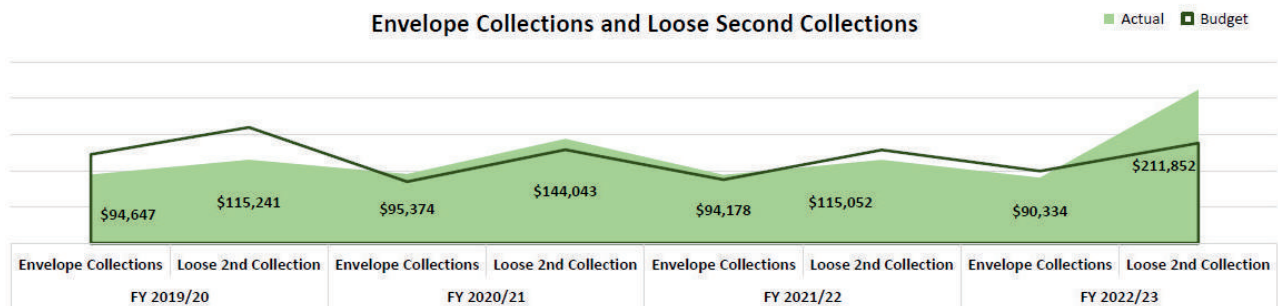
Income Overview



On a further note:

- Diocesan funding for the the operations of Parramatta Cathedral was increased by \$17k
- Envelope collections, maintained FY 22 levels at \$90k
- Wedding income maintained FY 22 levels at \$30k

✶ Envelope Collections and Loose Second Collections



Notes:

● Envelopes

Envelope collections ended the financial year 2022/23 \$9k under budget

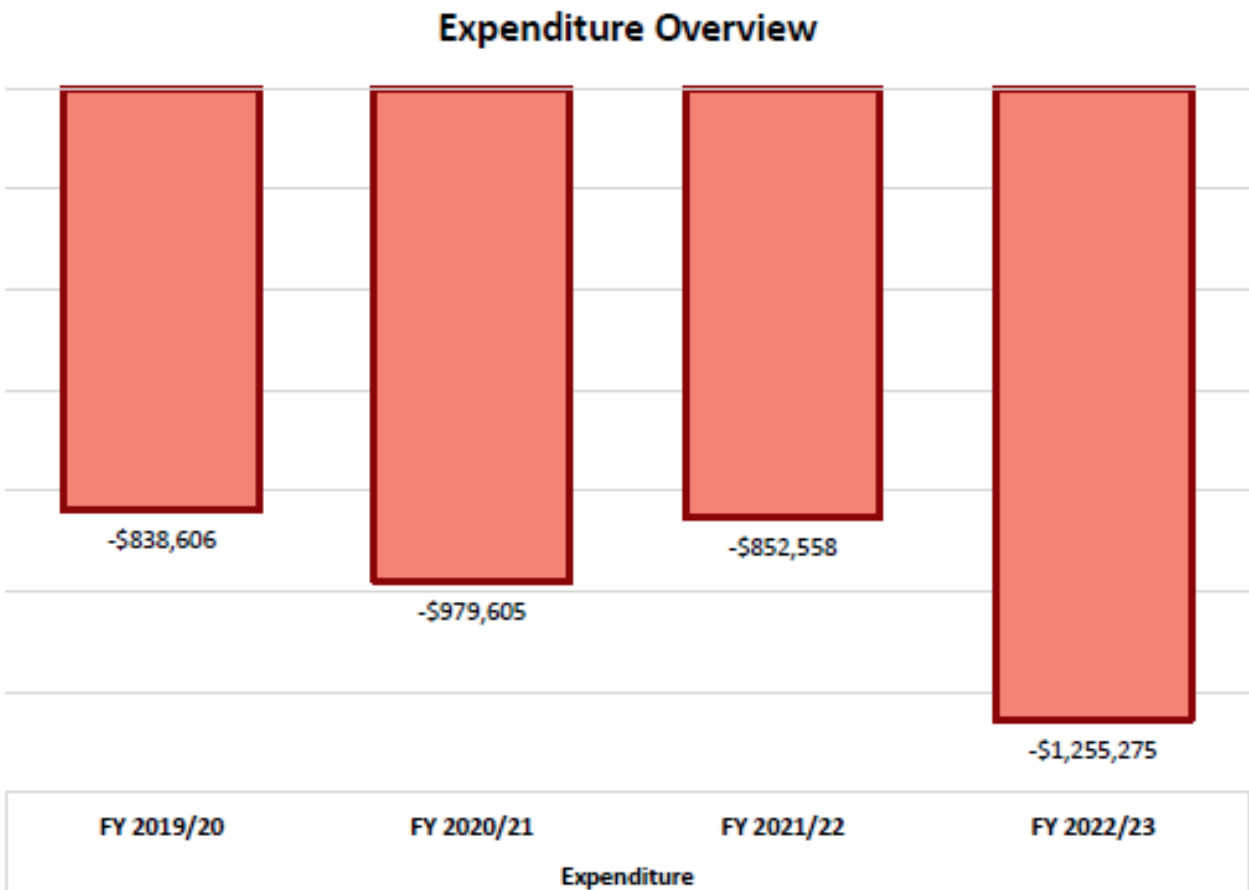
● Loose Collections

Loose second collections ended \$74k over budget



PARISH EXPENSES

 Overview

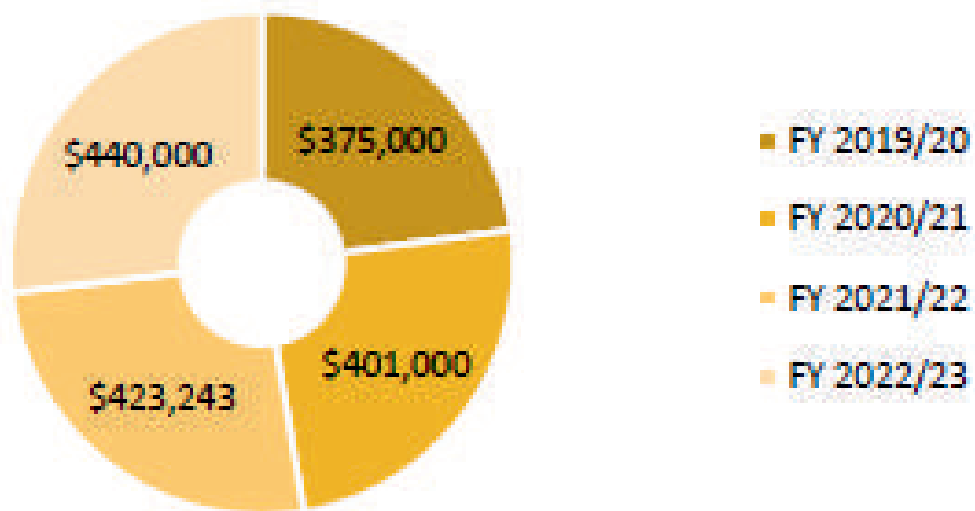


NOTES

- 56%** Altar and church requisites (UP by 56% | \$17k)
- 23%** Electricity and gas (UP by 23% | \$8k)
- 23%** Insurance costs (UP by 23% | \$13k)
- 23%** Printing, stationery & postage (UP by 23% | \$8k)
- 23%** Repairs and maintenance (UPby 23% | \$28k)
- \$147k** Cost of Stock Purchased (by \$147k)
- 108%** Pianist and Organist Expenses (UP by 108% | \$63k)

DIOCESAN GRANT

Overview

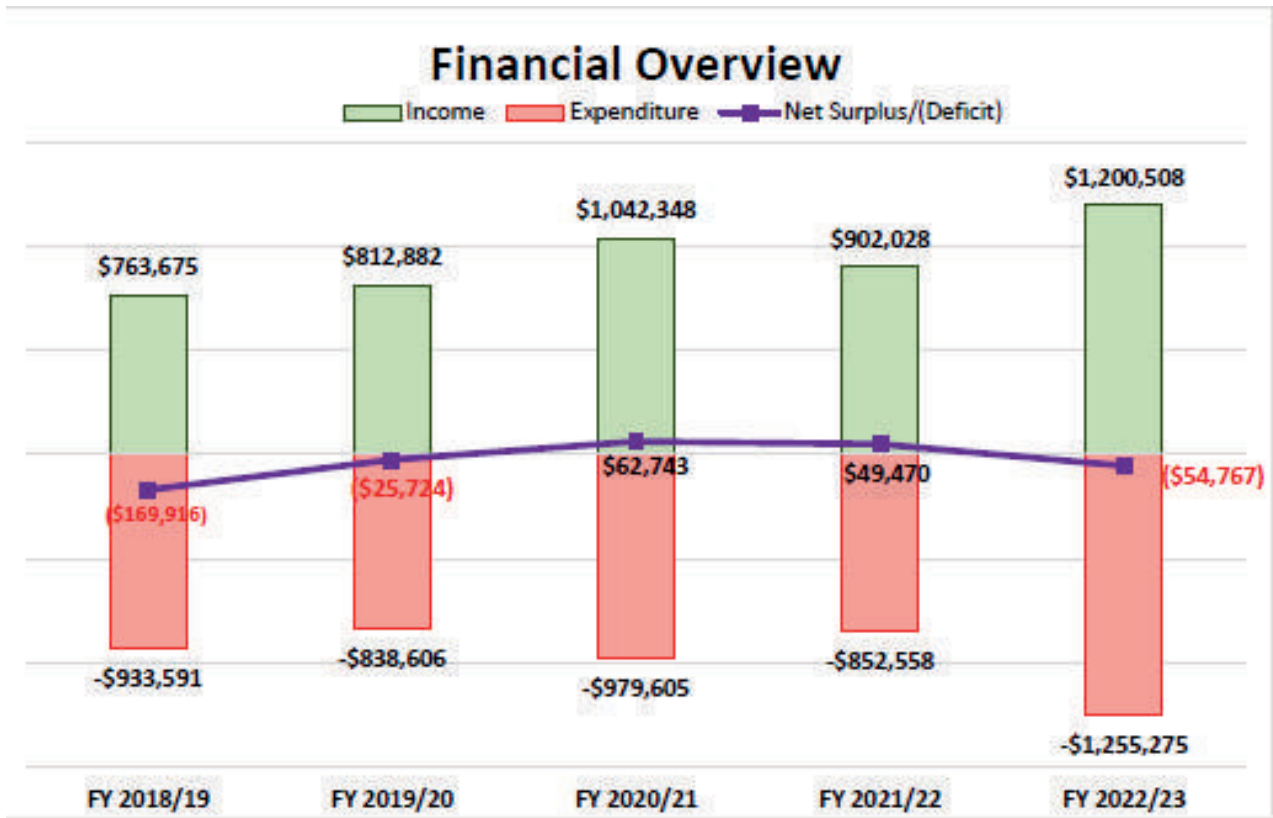


NOTES

- The Diocese increased operational funding to Parramatta Cathedral by \$17k during the Financial Year 2022/23

FINANCE REPORT

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



NOTES

- The overall increase (by 33%) in parish income was offset by an increase (by 47%) in parish expenditure.
- The net surplus of Parramatta Cathedral for the Financial Year (FY) 2022/23 was lower (by 21%) compared to that of FY 2021/22.



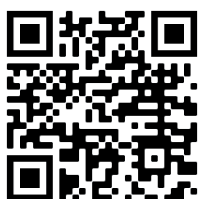
St Patrick's GIFT SHOP

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:





CONTACT US



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enquiry@stpatscathedral.com.au



Website

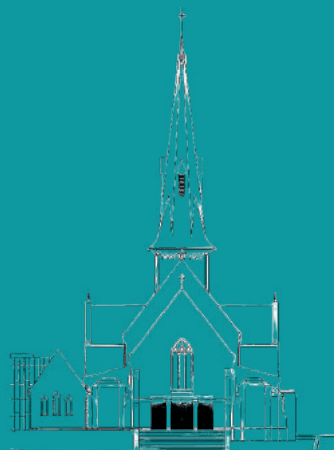
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ST PATRICK'S
CATHEDRAL
PARRAMATTA
2022-2023







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