

ST PAT'S MATTERS

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

Using our gifts
as God's co-workers



JULY 2023 | ISSUE 116

EDITORIAL

Issue 116 was meant to come out sometime after Easter, however, an unexpected family crises intervened.

Regrettably this delay has meant missing out on featuring an account of the beautiful Holy Week liturgies, culminating in the Sacred Paschal Triduum.

However, here you will read about three people's initiation into the Catholic Faith at the Easter Vigil; as well as meeting Shane and sharing his becoming a Catholic.

The initiation thread weaves yet further to include the spread on sixty children's sacramental journey as they receive Jesus for the first time in Holy Communion. Linking into this is Deacon David's beautiful reflection on Corpus Christi and the Real Presence.

Up front, two important issues are addressed: the *Diocesan Synod* by Fr Robert and *Stewardship* by Mili Lee. Further on, Fr Robert explains the importance of the Offertory Procession ritual.

On the music scene, Bernard Kirkpatrick writes about *Faith and the Art of Music*, while Adriel and Eleanor, members of the music ministry, introduce themselves to us.

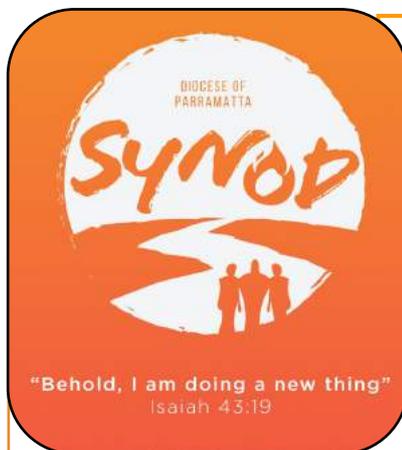
In the Update on Special Religious Education, enjoy reading about Victoria's, Tanya's, and Geanette's commitment to this ministry outreach to Catholic children in state schools.

Faith Formation matters. Racquel and John and Donna Missio share what they learnt through attending the Lenten Programme and the Pentecost Retreat.

Join the Seniors at the April Morning Tea where Jeff Hood spoke about *Ageing*. Journey with Bob Edgar to the Myall Creek Massacre Memorial; and Modern Mum as she faces the issue of teaching her boys anger management. Be confronted by Claire Pospischil's experience at a Parramatta Mission Dinner. Read Gabrielle Fox's swan song article on St Pat's Playgroup; and about Craig Donaldson's 'miracle' surf rescue.

Alas I've run out of space, so I leave you to discover what else unfolds in this issue. God's blessing on all!

M. Polizzi



DIOCESAN SYNOD
OCT 2023

A time to exercise
patience and
listening

FR ROBERT RIEDLING comments

When I was a seminarian I heard some very good advice, from one of my formators, which has stuck with me ever since. I was told that the greatest gifts a priest can give to anyone is both time and a listening ear. He said that these two things are so hard for people to come by in this very busy and, let's face it, self-centred society. People who are

experiencing some sort of pain or distress often want simply to sit with someone who is patient and who will listen in a non-judgmental manner to what they have to say. We call this accompaniment. Most of the time people aren't looking for a solution to their problems but just to have their concerns heard, a chance to unburden themselves to some degree.

The synod which is to be held in our diocese in October this year is essentially a gathering to exercise these two qualities: patience and listening. You will have already heard much about the synod over the past few months but hopefully not so much so that you switch off!

A synod seeks to establish one thing through patiently listening to the voices of a diverse range of people: where the Holy Spirit is leading the Church. We are all aware that in prayer it is just as important to be still and silent as it is to speak to God, because only in that stillness and silence can we hear what God wishes to say to us. This is the basic principle that applies also to the synodal process. People will be able to speak and share their points of view on the issues that form the basis of the synod's considerations, but it will be just as important for everyone present to listen without judgment to those voices, even when they are at odds with their own points of view.

Listening patiently is certainly not a skill that comes easily to most of us, probably in part because it is a skill not highly valued by society at large. Anyone who has some basic tech skills and a social media account can broadcast their views to a potential audience of millions, with no obligation to in turn pay attention to the views of others. But it is only when we take the time to listen to others, with humility, that we grow as God wants us to. I am always reminded in this vein of the stories of extremists, such as white supremacists, who have shed their views and no longer spout hateful and prejudicial views. Almost invariably they have changed through having had an encounter with the very people they had dehumanised, having listened patiently to them and recognised their common humanity and aspirations. A listening encounter can turn prejudice into acceptance, and even into love.

Of course, I understand how people might be cynical about the synodal process. It is almost certain that some people will say that it is a talk-fest, that it is a *fait accompli*, that certain voices will be silenced to ensure a particular outcome, or perhaps even that it is an attempt to curry favour with Pope Francis who is well known for his synodal approach. My response to this is simply to say that this process, as shown by historical precedent, is the best way to move the Church forward to ensure that the Gospel message, the message of mercy, salvation and love, is preached most effectively in a diocese which is growing rapidly and needs to hear this message. Let us focus less on politics and wanting to defend a particular position, be it on the left or the right, and open ourselves to hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit, the voice of God.

I look forward to writing something in the next edition of *St Pat's Matters* when we will be more advanced in the process and will have a better idea of where the Spirit is leading the Church in the Diocese of Parramatta.



As Issue 116 goes to press, STEWARDSHIP has been the hot topic being promoted in June's Parish Bulletins. A campaign is afoot urging parishioners to reflect upon how to use their TIME, TALENT and TREASURE to transform St Pat's Parish into the caring community God wants us to be.

At 9:30am Mass, on June 18, Mili Lee, member of St Pat's office staff team, spoke about her journey towards STEWARDSHIP.

On a personal level, I am a mother to four wonderful children, eagerly looking forward to becoming a grandmother soon. Family is incredibly important to me, and it is through my faith and the support of this parish community that I have found love, joy and strength.

Stewardship is a concept that has been discussed in our bulletins over the past few weeks. In essence, it involves giving back to God in gratitude for all the blessings He has bestowed upon us. This can be achieved by dedicating our time, sharing our talents, and contributing our resources to the betterment of our parish community.

I stand before you today to inspire and encourage you to reflect upon those gifts our loving God has granted you and urge you to consider using them to build St Pat's and to assist in extending outreach beyond parish — spreading the Good News to other communities.

Allow me to share a personal story from my own stewardship journey. In 1996, shortly after the Cathedral fire, I read a bulletin notice requesting a cantor. Although I didn't read music very well, I felt a deep calling to contribute. Determined, I approached the then Director of Music [Lynda Tooth] and offered my help. To my surprise and delight, she agreed to give me the role of cantor for the 11am Mass the following Sunday. Looking back, I realize now that I was taking on a significant responsibility as a Cathedral cantor, even though my

musical experience had been limited to singing with family and friends around the kava bowl. If I had known the full extent of what I was signing up for, I might have hesitated, and that would have been a tremendous loss for myself, my family, and all of you in the pews. One 'yes' later led to another. In 2009, during a parish meeting discussing ways to improve parish finances, I volunteered to run the parish Spring Fair. Little did I know that this simple act of saying 'yes' would ultimately lead to my appointment as the parish secretary, a role I never anticipated or applied for. I am immensely grateful for the many years I have had the privilege to serve in various capacities here at St. Patrick's.

While it is true that I have given much to this community through my service, I can honestly say that I have received so much more in return. This parish is like family, and we have shared in both the joys and the sorrows of life together. Through faith and the support of this community, I have not only grown in my personal and professional life but also deepened my relationship with God.

My motivation for stewardship is rooted in my unwavering faith and the love I have for my parish family. I firmly believe that by saying 'yes' and dedicating our time, talents, and treasures to God's work, we can create a compassionate, loving and thriving community that extends far beyond the walls of this cathedral.

Let us reflect upon the blessings we have received and consider how we can contribute to the growth and prosperity of St Pat's parish. Together, let us embrace stewardship and continue to spread the good news to whoever we encounter on our journey.

One reason I am committed to serving is because of my deep sense of loyalty and commitment to family**. It is ingrained in us to show up for one another and support each other in times of need.

Another driving force behind my stewardship is my unwavering faith.

Throughout the five decades of my life, I have experienced the loving kindness of our Lord. I often reflect on the famous poem, "Footprints in the Sand", knowing that He has carried me through life's challenges and blessings.

I show up to serve because there is simply nothing else I can do to repay the immeasurable love I have been given, except to give my time, share my talents, and contribute to the community through planned giving.

My fellow parishioners, I urge you, to actively participate in stewardship. We gather at Mass because we have all experienced the love of God in our lives. Stewardship is a call to discipleship, and it requires us to discern what we can say YES to in service to our parish.

I encourage you to take the pamphlet and bulletin home, read them, and pray about how the Holy Spirit is asking you to be an instrument of God's love in our parish. Don't be afraid to get involved and step forward. Unlock the blessings of being a disciple of Christ by courageously saying, to Him, "Yes, use me."

Remember the story of the loaves and fishes? The disciples didn't think what they had was enough. But they still gave it to Jesus and he made it more than enough to feed everyone around them. What you may feel is a small contribution could be all that God needs to make it enough for our whole community. Your unique gifts and offerings can make a significant impact on our community's growth

Let us embrace the spirit of stewardship and as a united family, continue to build and grow our parish, spreading the love and teachings of Christ to everyone we encounter on our journey. Thank you for your presence here today and for considering how you can actively participate in the mission of our community.

**Editor's Note: What Mili did not explain: she owes her loyalty and commitment to family to her Fijian ancestry.

LET EACH OF US ASK OURSELVES:

How do I see the giving of my time, talent and treasure to my parish as an offering of love to both my fellow parishioners and God?

Initiation Matters

9th DECEMBER, 2022:
A DAY OF GREAT JOY for SHANE.



On this day Fr Chris del Rosario initiated a beaming Shane into the Catholic Faith.

Accompanying him were Acolyte Edward Safardi, (who was his sponsor) and parishioner Paul Mousley.

When asked, Shane was more than happy to answer some questions we asked about what this very important experience meant to him.

How did you feel about being baptized?

It made me feel awesome to get baptized at St Patrick's Church, a church with good brothers and sisters and priests, who all bring me closer to God, help me and make me happy.

When you were actually baptized how did you feel?

I felt closer to God, Mother Mary and the Holy Spirit and the church and I didn't want to let my Lord down. All the fathers in the past and present here at St Patrick's have been awesome, so I felt really good when I was baptized.

Why did you want to get baptized?

I always was a believer in God and Jesus. That was the missing part of the puzzle to be a Christian and to be closer to God, Jesus and Mother Mary. Thank you to Bishop Vincent, Father Robert and Father Chris for making it happen. Thank you to everyone who supported me, from the office staff, the people in the gift shop, who are friendly and very helpful to make sure you purchase the right stuff.

Thank you to all the church family for supporting me and helping the homeless.



Baptismal candle in hand, Shane's Confirmation began with the *Laying on of Hands* by Fr Chris, who then anointed him, making the sign of the Cross on his forehead with the Oil of Chrism, saying **"Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit"**, then touching Shane's cheek he pronounced the beautiful exhortation, **"Peace be with you"**

Receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, Shane completed his initiation, into the Catholic Faith.

↓ A happy Shane shakes Fr Chris' hand, giving him the thumbs up in sincere thanks



Thanks to Pat Preca for the images on pages 4&5

INITIATION AT THE EASTER VIGIL



Initiation of people into the Catholic Faith is always a prominent part of the beautiful Liturgy for the Easter Vigil.

For **Jennifer Dokken, Justin Kwong and Emily Moore**, this year's Easter Vigil saw the culmination of their time spent journeying as catechumens through R.C.I.A. (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.)

After their presentation to Bishop Vincent, the Elect went in grand procession to the Baptistry in the following order: The Easter Candle, The Elect with Godparents & Sponsors, Assistant ministers & Clergy, Bishop Vincent, the Assembly.

Before Initiation began, the ritual, **Blessing of the Baptismal Water** took place: During the Bishop's prayer, Deacon David Dowling lowered the Paschal Candle into the water of the font, three times: *'.....May the power of the Holy Spirit, O Lord, come down through your Son into the fullness of this font, so that all who have been buried with Christ by Baptism into death may rise again to life with him...'*

Then in answer to the Bishop's questions about renouncing sin and belief in the tenets of the Creed, the Candidates responded "I do".

The Bishop then baptised all three, *'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'*



Back in the cathedral, clothed in their Baptismal Garments, Jennifer, Justine and Emily were presented with their Baptismal Candles by their godparents. Then came **CONFIRMATION**: with the **Laying on of Hands** then **Anointing with Chrism**,



as the Bishop, said, *'Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.'* Then touching the cheek, he said, *'Peace be with you.'* Final Initiation step:



Receiving Jesus in the Eucharist

WELCOME NEOPHYTES!

Following the Easter Vigil, parishioners were on hand to serve supper to our new Catholics. Bishop Vincent presented each with a gift as a memento of this milestone in the journey to initiation into the Faith.

As usual, there was a celebratory cake to mark the occasion. Parish Secretary, Pat Preca had the presence of mind to take photos during the Easter Vigil. We thank her for what she was able to capture.





SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION MATTER

On the Feast of Corpus Christi sixty children received their First Eucharist, the second Sacrament of Initiation, into the Catholic Church: Baptism is the first, Confirmation the third.



- Makayla Abdou
 Noah Abu-ali
 Xavier Abu-ali
 George Achandy
 Jayden Marzell Arguijo
 Jordan Arguijo
 Jacob Anthony Assaf
 Elijah Sam Baysari
 Leonardo Ross Baget
 Samuel Brian Betros
 Rebecca Kelly Black
 Aldrie Calalang
 Charlie Skye Chua
 Angelica Christiana David
 Abe Emmanuel Deloso
 Bruce Dig
 Aliya Agnez Ali Ebrahim
 Alessio Formica
 Chiara Formica
 Raihaan Chowallur Fremlin
 Monica Catherine Gould
 Oliver Kai Gross
 Aria Lai Jeng Gross
 Mahalia Jackson
 Nathanael Jaitani
 Cienna Joachim
 John William Kerr
 Ryan Joseph Kootumkal
 Taran Dinzsh Kumar
 Daniel Lawrencz
 Vittorio Lo Surdo
 Sebastian Malak
 Orlando Mapagu
 Mrecedez Olga Mauala
 Elijah Missak
 George Nassif
 Nicholas Nassif
 Noah Naudi
 Kayla Oliver
 Joseph Peter
 Jennifer Peter
 Maria Josefina Palomo
 Florentina Escandor Thompson
 Natasha Shreyya Rajesh
 Brayden Ratnam
 Stacy Ratnam
 Isaac Rafael
 Christian Adam Rafael
 Lucia Francine Reyes-Mangabat
 Rafael Matzo Rodriguez
 Trey St John Tannous
 Mark Tellis
 Ava Rose Tornatore
 Rachel Vinod Theruviparambil
 Blake Matthew Utzurrum
 Erika Louise Valdez
 Mariana Vallejos
 Adelina Vallejos
 Isabelle Julia Velasquez
 Vincenzo Adriano Zamora





*How
to
receive
Jesus*

The First Communicants show us.



with hands cupped, receive Him with Awe, Reverence & Joy.



Cause for Celebration

The Day of Our First Holy Communion.

Mementos Matter

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

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



After the group photo session, Fr Robert gave the children their Holy Communion Certificates in the hall.

And the Finale? Cutting of the celebratory cake!



From Fr Robert Riedling:

We thank the parents and Sacrament Team of the Cathedral who worked collaboratively to prepare the children for this important step in their faith journey.

Please pray for the First Communicants as they prepare to welcome Christ into their hearts, that their First Communion Day will begin a life-long love of the Eucharist.

Worth Remembering

Dear friends, today I invite you to remember in your prayers each child, who is to receive the Eucharist for the first time today.

This important step in their faith journey is a reminder of Christ's love for them.

Additionally, I invite you into their shoes to remember your nervous excitement when you first received the Eucharist.

We are privileged to receive Our Lord regularly which can result in familiarisation;

may we never forget to receive the Eucharist full of faith, for Jesus Christ, God Incarnate, is truly present in our midst

Extract from Fr Chris del Rosario's bulletin reflection on the Feast of Corpus Christi



The Feast of Corpus Christi

The Assembly present at 11am Mass on this momentous Feast Day, were blessed to hear Deacon David's inspiring and enlightening homily on the Eucharist. His permission was sought to publish it in St Pat's Matters, so at least readers will have the benefit of reflecting on the importance of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

And fittingly it linked in with the Sacrament of First Holy Communion for 60 recipients, which took place at 9:30 Mass. Hopefully parents of those children will be amongst the people who get to read this and so remember what the Eucharist really is.



The health and nutrition experts love their sound-bites. One liners that capture some important point. They'll say: "*You can't outrun a bad diet.*" In other words no amount of exercise makes up for eating poorly. Another one that I like is: "*You are what you eat.*" Basically, if I eat tons of donuts my waistline will start to look like a donut. Or if I survive on fast food, like Maccas and KFC, foods full of calories but little nutrition, my body will get pretty unhealthy, whereas if I eat lots of food high in nutrition and low in calories, my body will likely be pretty healthy.

So, why does this matter?

Well, for Catholics, we believe that we are made up of body and soul and that the two are intrinsically linked and together they make up a person.

Pope John Paul II, (now St John Paul II), made it very clear that body and soul are completely inter-linked, and what we do with our body affects our soul, and what we do spiritually affects our body.

Today, being the Feast of Corpus Christi, let's reflect a little on what it means to our person when we receive the Eucharist.

**The Eucharist is a sacrament,
and not just any sacrament.**

It is the source and the summit of our faith.

There are **two key aspects** of a sacrament:

First, every sacrament has a tremendous power contained within it. We can call it grace.

But the second part, — and this is the part that people often miss -

A sacrament will be as fruitful as how it is received.

Let me say that again:

A sacrament will be as fruitful as how it is received.

Here's one way to look at it. If you have a winning lottery ticket, you have something very valuable. But you only get that value when you claim the prize. That is how it is with sacraments. The grace is there, but for that grace to be fruitful you have to do your part to step up and claim it.

To begin, let's consider what it is we are receiving. Some people think it's just a sign or a symbol. It is not! Some people think it's just a holy wafer. It is not!

Jesus says very clearly at every Mass:

"This is my body. This is my blood."

He tells us in today's Gospel,

"My body is real food, and my blood is real drink."

From the very beginning of Christianity, we have known that when we receive the Eucharist, we are receiving the Real Presence of Christ, the person of Christ.

This is an encounter with Jesus.

He is offering Himself to each of us, in a most *personal and intimate way.*

So how should we receive Him?

Our encounter with Christ might be best described like a beautiful marriage.

In a good marriage a husband offers himself **fully and completely** to his wife, and a wife offers herself **fully and completely** to her husband

In the Eucharist, Christ offers Himself fully and completely to each of us, person by person. We must receive that gift with joy and praise and in turn offer ourselves back in love.

This loving exchange is the "communion" that St Paul is talking about in the 2nd reading. [1Cor 10:16-17] We enter a beautiful intimate communion with Christ.

So let's remember this:

**Communion is not something you receive,
it is something you engage in.**

So to sum up what does all this mean for us and how we might receive the Eucharist today?

Well, we begin by understanding that we are about to enter an encounter with Jesus. **We prepare our hearts** for something beautiful and remarkable.

Then when we receive the Eucharist **we engage in that encounter** in our hearts, we savour it. We receive Christ and we offer ourselves back in love.

And lastly we remain conscious that having received Christ into our body and soul, He is now an increasing part of each of our lives.

As we leave Mass, **we are carrying Him into the world,** through us.

In today's Gospel [John 6:51-58], Jesus says:

"The person who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, lives in me, and I live in them."

So, week by week, and encounter by encounter, if we receive Him **in this way**, this grace will change us. The more we receive Him, the more He will live in us, and the more He lives in us the more we will grow like Him. And so, maybe, in time, in some real and tangible ways, we might become what we eat



SRE MINISTRY MATTERS

Serving GOD & Community

Last issue we met the three new SRE recruits Here two of them, Tanya and Victoria, write about how and why they came to volunteer for this important ministry.



I was attending Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral one Sunday, when at the end of Mass a beautifully-spoken young lady was appealing for people to join the SRE Ministry. After Mass I didn't hesitate, but went straight up to her and asked about joining. I didn't even think about what I was doing I just did it.

In life we have our ups and downs and like most people there were lots of downs in my life, but the only thing that got me back up was my Faith and the beautiful people in my life.

I feel that it's pretty selfish knowing about our amazing God and our Catholic Faith and having so much love and passion and not sharing it with Catholic students attending state schools. I want them to experience what I have experienced.

In 2019 I had assisted in SRE lessons at another parish. I had never done any training or teaching on my own. Unfortunately my involvement there didn't last very long as the world was shut down by COVID-19.

Now, I'm just about finished doing my Level 1 Training which I found extremely valuable. I felt I had all the right resources to give me the confidence to get in and start teaching. The presenters were so knowledgeable and really knew how to get the message across to us trainees. The people I met during the course were just beautiful. I'm really going to miss spending my Fridays with them.

I am now teaching Year 8 girls at Macarthur Girls High School. Being a Secondary Science Teacher I was gently pushed into that school! I'm so happy there as the girls are so well behaved and I really feel welcomed by them.

I'm also teaching at Parramatta North Public School — a combined Kindergarten/Year1/Year 2 with my sister-in-law Mary Wehbe and loving it . Mary has been a catechist for 20 years.

It's crucial we reach out to children in State Schools because without the SRE ministry the Word of God will not be spread to them. We need to start with our children so they can grow in faith and love.

I would encourage everyone to consider joining the SRE Ministry. Not only does it help the students learn about the faith, it has taught me so much. I truly believe that the Holy Spirit has guided me in every lesson because once I'm finished I look back over my lesson and think, *"How did those words even come out of my mouth, I had no idea I even knew this?"* Sometimes I think *"Oh I can't do this"*, but then I think of the students and realise it's only half an hour a week.

God willing, with His help, I'll be able to continue for a long time in this very important ministry.

Tanya Wehbe



Victoria's introduction to the SRE ministry began in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

Thirty-three years ago, while I was sitting praying in the front pew of St Therese's Church, Denistone the SRE coordinator of Denistone East Public School approached me and said, quote, *'You're so holy! I think you would make a good Catechist!* My immediate response? *'You've got the wrong person I'm not a teacher!'*

Twelve months later I gave in and became a helper! I was so bored just being a helper, I lasted two weeks. By the third week I was teaching.

I taught at Denistone Public for twenty years (Kindy, Yrs 1,2,3 & 5) and recruited two helpers, who were also parishioners. One of them was my helper for almost nineteen years! For one year I was teaching each week at Ryde Public School as well as at Denistone Public.

Teaching Year Three also involved preparing the children for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, and taking meetings with parents and children.

Then I taught at Croydon Public School for eleven years. (Kindy, Years 1 & 3).

When I moved to Parramatta in 2022 I met Tanya Wehbe one day at 7am Mass at St Oliver's Harris Park. Knowing I was an SRE teacher and that I love teaching Kindergarten, she mentioned there was a need for one at Parramatta East Public School. So I have been teaching Kindy since February this year and loving it! Thank you, Tanya!!

Of course before heading to the classroom, I had to meet with Fr Robert and Pamela Bain, St Pat's SRE coordinator to be interviewed and complete all the necessary paperwork.

All praise to the Holy Spirit, who gently guided me to this ministry! I feel it's so crucial to teach in State schools as the Catholic children there will only hear God's Word through SRE lessons.

Victoria Micalizzi



Geenat George, is still in training. And because she cannot attend day time sessions, she is completing her Level One Course on line.

Currently she is taking Scripture lessons at Parramatta Public School, being expertly mentored by St Pat's SRE Co-ordinator Pamela Bain.





Addressing a Sacred Music conference in Rome in 2018, Pope Francis highlighted how liturgical and sacred music can be a powerful instrument of evangelisation, because it gives people a glimpse of the beauty of heaven. "... your music and song are a true instrument of evangelisation insofar as you witness to the profoundness of the Word of God that touches the hearts of people, and allow a celebration of the sacraments, especially of the Holy Eucharist, which makes one sense the beauty of Paradise."¹

These words also echo Pope Benedict XVI, who stated that "faith becoming music is part of the process of the Word becoming flesh."² Drawing from the words of Saint John's Gospel: *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory"* (John 1:13), Benedict (then Cardinal Ratzinger) reminded us that the musical expression of our faith, is our response to God's love and mercy, revealed to us through the birth, suffering, death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. It is for this reason that the church, from the earliest times, has exhorted Christians to speak to each other *"in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"*. (Ephesians 5:19). The apostle Paul writing to the Colossians (3:16) encourages the church to teach and admonish each other with these same psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. As the church's liturgy became ritualised throughout the ages, the art of music was employed to the extent that by the 6th Century, the normative liturgy was entirely sung, with each minister, choir, psalmists, cantors, and assembly expressing their faith in their respective liturgical roles.

Our faith, when it takes on musical form in singing with melody, rhythm, harmony and instruments, is, in this sense, making the Word in our heart a realised presence in our world, which we share with others. Music of faith, unlike other forms of music is not simply that which is *"rhythmic ecstasy, sensual suggestion or stupefaction, subjective emotional bliss or superficial entertainment."*³ It is subordinated to a message which is encapsulated in the Word made flesh. It assists us in realising our Christian mission of bringing Christ into the world. Our witness in music becomes a means of evangelisation. This mission is nicely encapsulated in the liturgical rites which were once used for admitting a person to the role of psalmist or cantor in the liturgy: *Vide, ut, quod ore cantas, corde credas, et quod corde credis, operibus comprobas*⁴. – often quoted as the "chorister's prayer" *"See that what you sing with your tongue, you may believe in your heart and what you believe in your heart shall show forth in your works."*⁴

The artistry of music however must not detract from the Word, so that we lose all focus on the reason we pray privately, or communally when we celebrate the liturgy of the church. Throughout the ages, we are reminded of this dynamic tension between artistry and expression of the word which from time to time has brought the need for reform. E.g. St. Bernard was known to chastise the monks for loving the sound of their own voices – in singing the chants with their endless melismas, leading to the 12th century Cistercian reform of "cutting down" the length!⁵ In the 16th century the balance between text and music in choral polyphony (multi-voice singing) had distorted to the point that it no longer served the Word, but became purely art for art's sake. Legend has it that Palestrina convinced the Pope and Council of Trent not to abandon polyphony (multi-voice harmony singing), by producing a new, more transparent form of polyphony which enabled the words to be heard clearly and succinctly. The composition became known as the *Missa Papae Marcelli*

Having said this, however, we must be cautious not to misunderstand or diminish the importance which artistry plays in music of faith, and especially music in our liturgy – it must be a thing of beauty, both in its conception and the manner it is performed. Music of worship should not be "cheap", trite or banal. Nor should the zeal for reform, (today, often disguised in terms such as "relevance" or "meaningfulness") reduce liturgical music to something which is simply a vehicle for rendering text. Benedict says that *"after all, 'word' in the biblical sense is more than text, and comprehension includes more than the banal perspicuity of what is obvious to everyone, what is to be compressed into the most superficial rationality."* The artistry of sacred music serves the "word" in a comprehensive sense, drawing all our senses into the *"sursum corda"*. (*Lift up your hearts*).

For this reason, the church permits all forms of music which authentically vivify our spirits. This position was reiterated by Vatican II in its liturgical reforms of the Mass, promoting music from the "treasury of sacred music" across the ages such as Gregorian chant and a cappella polyphony from the Latin repertoire through to contemporary compositions and works in the vernacular (the language of the people) which reflect the diversity of cultures within the universal church.

In our liturgical worship, everyone has a particular part to play, from the clergy who lead the sung prayer, to trained music ministers who add their expertise and beauty to the whole musical offering. The assembly of the faithful are also encouraged to add their part to the public act of worship through their "full, conscious and active participation".

Finally, if music of our faith and liturgy is our response to God's redeeming work, then we must not forget that it is the Word made flesh, who is at the centre of our worship. St. Augustine, in his "Expositions on the Psalms" wrote the following:

*"Do you know what a hymn is? It is singing to the praise of God. If you praise God and do not sing, you utter no hymn. If you praise anything which does not pertain to the praise of God -- though in singing you praise, you utter no hymn. A hymn then contains these three things: song, and praise, and that of God. Praise then of God in song is called a hymn."*⁶

These words resonate loudly in the current liturgical environment, where our experience at church often includes the participation in songs which overly focus on "I", "us" and "we". Music of faith does not simply celebrate ourselves, it orients us to the One who creates and redeems us.

Let us therefore continue to express our faith with music in all its artistry – giving flesh to the Word, so that His Glory may continue to be seen.

1. Pope Francis, Address to International Meeting of Choirs Sacred Music Conference. Vatican City, Nov 23-25, 2018

2. "Liturgy and Church Music" – Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger - Lecture November 17, 1985 – printed in Sacred Music 112 (1986, pp.13-22) , and A New Song for the Lord - NY: Crossroad 1995)

3. Ibid

4. Pontificale Romanum of 1595-6 in the form for admitting a Psalmist or Cantor:

5. See also: Aelred of Rievaulx: *The Mirror of Charity*, bk. II, ch. 23: 'The vain pleasure of the ears', tr. E. Connor, (Kalamazoo, 1990), pp 209-212.

6. Augustine on Psalm 148:14 in his "Expositions on the Psalms" [A modern paraphrase by Louis F. Benson: Louis F. Benson, hymnologist.; Morgan Phelps Noyes. Publisher: New York, Hymn Society of America, 1955

Adriel Sukumar



Adriel has been a Cantor and Choral Scholar in the bass section of the Saint Patrick's Cathedral Choir since the beginning of this year and has greatly enjoyed his time so far. He had previously participated in music ministry at OLMC in Wentworthville as singer/cantor, and over the last six years as an organist as well.

Music has always been a huge part of his life, starting with piano lessons and studies in Carnatic music followed by various other instruments, before a shift to composition early in high school. As a primarily self-taught composer at the time, he had a Fanfare recorded by the Australian Youth Orchestra and his work 'Recovery' performed by Steel City Strings in their 2021 Celebration of Youth concert series.

Adriel started studying a Bachelor of Music (Composition) at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 2022. Since then he has had many works premiered by his fellow students and was awarded the Sydney Conservatorium of Music's 2022 Horace Keats Memorial Prize for Composition. He had his orchestral fanfare 'First Light' recorded by the Sydney Youth Orchestras, and looks forward to a possible premier of his organ work 'Ascension' at a future Organ Music Society of Victoria event after winning their 2021-2022 composition competition. His 2020 congregational Mass setting (Mass of Carmel) is also currently being implemented into the repertoire at OLMC. He is currently working on a choral Mass Setting to hopefully be premiered at the Cathedral later this year.

Some of his current compositional influences are drawn from plainchant and its forms, polyphony and other contrapuntal music, and composers such as Mahler and Messiaen. Adriel enjoys looking for new ways to synthesise these diverse influences with his own compositional practices.

As a performer, Adriel has participated in choirs including the Sydney Conservatorium Chamber Choir. He was also part of the Song Company's 2022 performances of Tallis' 'Spem in Alium'. He enjoys playing piano for the premieres of both his own works, and those of his peers.

He loves to spend his free afternoons seeing various music performances including regular Sydney Symphony Orchestra concerts, chamber music, and new music by living composers.

Eleanor Taig



I have been involved with church music and liturgy since about the age of 7 joining the Epping NSW Parish choir, moving to solo cantor as I started Macquarie University where I completed an Economics Degree.

I undertook singing lessons (continued to do so for most of my life) and have been a professional cantor for several years. I have sung at many parishes, weddings, funerals, Pope visitations, World Youth Conventions, retirement villages, Community Choirs such as Willoughby Symphony Choir (in conjunction with Sydney Philharmonia at Opera House) and Rock N Soul Choir, and the annual 'Carols on the Common' Ensemble. I was also a member of a band called 'Sapphire Moon'.

I was invited to join the team of Cantors here at St Patrick's Cathedral and started in 2016 and am thoroughly enjoying being a "Cantrix" (as Bernard says) and working with the fantastic organists. I also am the music coordinator and solo cantor at St Anthony's Parish Marsfield NSW, singing with other music groups in the parish as needed.

My current day job is 'Music Administrator' for St Mary's Cathedral Sydney. While a significant part of my life outside of church music/liturgy is spent preparing for the next mass/event I will sing at, I also love spending time with my godsons, their children and my great niece and nephew as well as cross-stitching and baking.

A statement of Bernard's worth repeating:

***Music of faith does not simply celebrate ourselves,
it orients us to the One who creates and redeems us.***

Seniors matter

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

Morning Tea Tuesday, 18th April.

This gathering continues activities purpose-built for the parish's ministry to Seniors

There was a varied array of foods and beverages from which to choose. The presence of white linen on the tables, vases of flowers, real crockery and cutlery made the attendees feel extra special.



The atmosphere was convivial, conversations flowed freely. And it so happened it was Barbara Hector's 87th birthday, so all present sang a rousing rendition of *Happy Birthday* to her.

Seminarian Jeff Hood was present at the Morning Tea and had been invited to give a talk. His topic on **Ageing**, offers so much food for thought, that it deserved to be shared with the wider parish community.



Jeff Hood's talk on AGEING



I grew up in Murwillumbah on the North Coast. My Mum died just under 2 years ago, at the age of 92. I visited her frequently and we would often go for country drives around Tweed Valley. On one of these drives a few years ago, I asked her, "Do you have any regrets about your life?" She thought for a few seconds, then answered "no". I was shocked because I couldn't say that about my own life. There are decisions I had made and periods of my life that I wished I had navigated differently. I had many regrets.

Around seven or so years ago, I experienced a very dark period of my life. Nothing really bad had happened. But I was questioning very deeply. I felt like a total failure. When I talked about this with close friends, they simply listed the good things I had done and could not understand what I was talking about.

In a sense, their response was right. I had achieved a lot in my life. Yet, something was not right. It seemed like the dreams of my youth had deserted me. I hadn't given them up, but they had given me up. I was asking myself, "Is this all there is?". Yet, from the outside, my life looked good. And, in many ways, it was.

So, what was going on?

In our early years, we focus on "setting up our life". We build a kind of container for our life to sit in. We plan for our future. We look at training for a career or we look for a job. We form partnerships, get married, have children. We look at where we want to live, rent, buy or build a home. Families are raised. Some people choose productive single lives. We develop friendship circles. We find a church and become actively involved to varying degrees. Mostly, we start our adult lives with a good deal of optimism. We expect that all will be well.

Then we discover that many things in life are beyond our control. We can't avoid sickness. Sometimes, we, or those we love, experience serious or life-threatening illness. Financial struggles haunt us. Loved ones die, often older, more distant relatives. Then those close to us begin to die. We might lose a job or grow to hate our place of work, but feel trapped because we need to earn money to survive, or to provide for a family. Life becomes not so rosy.

You get the picture – And you know that this is not theory, but real lived experience. Often, we have an experience where it seems like "life catches up with us." The "good old days" are gone. Often, this is an experience of feeling helpless, vulnerable, disempowered. We may try hard, struggle, feel like giving up, suffer. Sometimes we feel like "no good can come from this." It's common for people to feel that God has deserted them. Sometimes we get angry with God – and that's okay!! Although life is not all bad, there can be times when it feels like it is.

Cont'd next page

Jeff Hood's article continued.

There's a book called "The Five Stages of the Soul", written by two Geriatricians, Harry Moody and David Carroll. They did a piece of research exploring spiritual growth in mid-life and into old age. What they discovered was that most people have a time in their life that became a major period of transformation. It's often triggered by some kind of suffering. It might be the death of a partner or loved one. Some people experience this at retirement when our identity, "*who we are*", is challenged. '*Who am I now, that I'm not... a nurse, a mechanic, etc?*' Parents are often challenged when their last child leaves home. "*My baby has grown up – they don't need me or depend on me anymore.*"

What Moody and Carroll say is that this challenge is really a new Call, a Call to something much deeper in our life. It's not about the more surface or physical things like 'where do I live?', 'what job do I do?', 'what car do I want to drive?' It's not that these are not important. But it's a call to something more important, to something much deeper, to something in the core of our being. It's not suggesting that these things have been absent in our lives. But it's a call to make them central.

Let me give you an example. For those of you who have children, what clothes you buy for them and what schools you have sent them to are important issues. But, they are not the core issues of parenting. A much bigger and more important issue is, "*how well did you love them?*" In life generally, the big questions are not, how much money did you earn?, what was your house worth?, what car did you drive?, did you have a high status job?, etc. We think these questions are important, but really they're not. And you can lose those things in a flash.

It's not that these questions are unimportant. But, they fade in importance, when you ask, how loving have I been, how compassionate? How have I contributed to creating a better world, a more just world? Have I placed kindness and understanding above my own needs? These are the kind of questions we ask during Lent. Why? Because these are the core questions that keep bringing us back to the core of life. As we age, we start to reflect a lot more on life, in general, and on our own lives in particular. We are often challenged by our perceived failures, by regrets and by disappointments.

The feeling that '*Time is running out*' is very common after the age of sixty. There's less time to do what I wanted in my life, less time to correct mistakes, to make up with people we haven't spoken to for decades, to mend wounded relationships. There's also less time to find the deepest parts of ourselves and to become comfortable with who we are, who we have been, and who we want to grow to become in our life ahead.

Yet, this is the principal task of becoming older. We need to reconcile with ourselves, with other people and with God. If we fail to do this, we can end up in despair – lonely, miserable and grumpy. This stage of life is really about finding deeper meaning. It's not about perfection. It's not about trying to be good. It's about acceptance, of ourselves, of others – And, most importantly about acceptance of Truth. What does that mean?

One of my favourite scripture verses is from Psalm 50:

***"Indeed you love truth in the heart;
then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom."***

The greatest wisdom we can acquire is to know, in the core or our being, that we are deeply and passionately loved by our God. It's not just some nice theological idea. We talk about that a lot in church, but how much do we really embrace the fullness of what that means. I don't know how many thousands of hours of therapy and counselling that I have done, but I am certain about the core issue that almost everyone I have worked with has:

Most people do not believe, in their heart, that they are loveable and worthwhile. We all carry some sense that 'I'm not good enough.' We all carry wounds that lead us to believe that '*I'm unlovable*' is a fact or is the truth. But, it's the greatest lie the world was ever told. That I think is the basis for our understanding of original sin. I think all sin, and all woundedness has this belief at its core. Our salvation is to believe the Good News. That's repentance – the word in the NT literally means a 'change of mind, a change of heart'. **You are deeply loved by God. That is not simply a nice sentiment. It is the truth that is at the very core of our faith. It is the core of Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum. That is the fundamental truth. And it is that truth that will set you free. When we move the belief that God loves us more than we can imagine from our head to our heart, then we are free.**

Old age is about acquiring and consolidating our wisdom – not knowledge, but the deep wisdom that comes only from suffering and from allowing ourselves to learn and to grow from our suffering. It is about letting go – of our need to control, of our need to be important; of our attachments that enslave us. In the letting go and surrendering to God, we recognise that we already are important, moreso than we can ever imagine. In trusting God, we can surrender our need to control.

When we believe this, we have a big future. Time is not running out. We are only just beginning. Good Friday is not the end of the story. Resurrection is how the story ends. Embracing this, with God's grace, has the power to transform us. As you age, you don't have less to offer the world, you have way more. Embrace it and celebrate it. You have the power to be prophets to a world in need – simply by being fully yourself.

18th April 2023

Barbara Hector, 'the birthday girl', wrote to Jeff,

Dear Jeff,

I thoroughly enjoyed your talk.

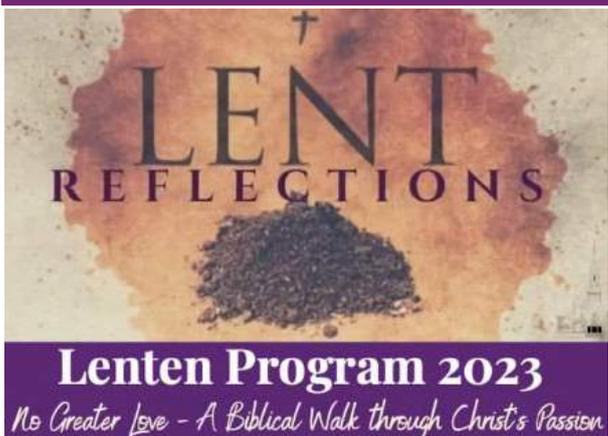
My Mother died at the age of 93 and would not use a walking stick as she thought they were only for OLD people.

You touched on a lot of aspects that were so very interesting.

We don't call ourselves 'old', but rather 'mature'.

Thank you so much, Jeff.

Faith Formation Matters:



St Pat's Lenten Program, *No Greater Love — A Biblical Walk through Christ's Passion*, organised by Michael and Marietta Guillema, began on 25th February after the Vigil Mass and continued for 5 Saturdays. Participants Racquel La Rosa and John and Donna Missio were happy to share their experience of attending the sessions.

Videos by Dr Edward Sri entitled “*No Greater Love*” were shown. These were followed by insights from the Presenter, Charbel Raish of Parousia Media.

The videos were a biblical walk through Christ's Passion. It started with Jesus' prayer at Gethsemane at the foot of the Mount of Olives. From the four Gospels we know that is where Jesus underwent agony just before His crucifixion. A beautiful testament of the veracity is the olive trees still alive there to this very day. The video showed where Jesus actually prayed.

Dr Edward Sri moves about the significant places of Jerusalem attesting to Jesus' passion. He provides the Bible passages pertinent to the sites. This enabled me to visualise the relevant events thus reinforcing in my mind the Bible passages. I have not been to the Holy Land, but through the videos I was able to vicariously experience Jesus' journey.

The last session focused on the last words Jesus spoke whilst hanging on the cross. Dr Edward took us to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (place of execution). Charbel expounded on Jesus' words, correlating them to the Old Testament to prove that the prophecy of a Messiah has been fulfilled. He referred us to the opening line of Psalm 22 — *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* — which is the translation of Jesus' lament ‘*Eli, Eli Lama Sabachtani*’ This was meant to trigger the memory of the Jews.

Charbel's insights and Dr Edward's videos were truly enlightening and gave me a broader understanding of Jesus' passion, encouraging me to contemplate more deeply on His passion, and in particular on His *Seven Last Words*.

Racquel



The sessions commenced with prayer and music followed by a 30-minute film from Ascension Press, who also promotes *The Bible in a Year* with Fr Mike Schmitz. Filmed on location in the Holy Land, *No Greater Love* is a biblical pilgrimage that reveals Christ's amazing love for us. Hosted by author Edward Sri, he guides us through the last hours of Christ's life, from the garden of Gethsemane to Mount Calvary. Every step of the way, Old Testament prophecies, messianic expectations, biblical symbolism, and historical context shed light on the mystery of Christ's suffering and death.

Our guest presenter, Charbel Raish, would then discuss the Gospel passages relating to the Passion of Christ and also answer any questions participants asked.

The Passion in the Gospels is very familiar to us, we listen to it on Palm Sunday, follow the Stations of the Cross and also after watching the Mel Gibson film, “*The Passion of the Christ*”, it is easy to visualise the scenes from the Gospels.

These Lenten sessions allowed us to study the Passion in the Gospels in more detail including references from the Psalms and the Old Testament.

Charbel is a gifted presenter and talks with great enthusiasm and knowledge of the Bible. He discussed in more details some of the questions that came up:-

- ◆ What was Jesus going through at each moment, noting that Jesus was in control throughout his passion.
- ◆ How did the Old Testament foretell Christ's death, Jesus being the fulfilment of God's promise of sending the Messiah?
- ◆ *Who are you looking for?* His power making the guards fall to the ground in the Garden at the time of His arrest.
- ◆ Why did Christ die for us? What did it accomplish?
- ◆ What was the meaning behind the tearing of the temple veil, the crowning with thorns and other events during Christ's Passion?
- ◆ What do the cryptic last words of Jesus mean?

We thoroughly enjoyed this Lenten Program as it gave us a greater understanding of the Gospels and helped us in our preparation for Easter.

John and Donna Missio:

Pentecost Matters *Through the Spirit we become citizens of Heaven*

A Retreat held at the Cathedral on Saturday May 27th, afforded attendees a time of **Reflection, Renewal and Celebration** in the company of fellow faithful to prepare for Pentecost.

Organisers: Michael and Marietta Guillema

John and Donna Missio, share what they learnt from attending this Retreat. (They were also at the Lenten talks.)

As an introduction, Fr Robert Riedling invited us to the first Listening Session for our Parish to be held on Saturday, 3 June 2023, introducing us to the Synod logo, explaining its meaning. After we prayed the Synod Prayer, Fr Robert then proceeded to highlight particular lines linking how they were important during this lead up time to the Synod.

Then, reflecting on the Pentecost Retreat last year, he noted that it was held whilst the Fifth Plenary Council was in progress.

Fr Robert's presentation included the topic of reform in the Church. The voice of the Holy Spirit talks to different people in different ways. The world today is very different from how it was 30 or 40 years ago:

How do we now, as individuals and a community, reach out to bring the Good News to those with whom we come in contact ?

The role of the Synod is similar to that of a Parish Council which offers advice to the Parish Priest; those participating in the Synod offer advice to the Bishop. The Synod itself, like a Parish Council, is not in a position to make final decisions on topics that are discussed and it cannot change Canon Law. Fr Robert spoke of how the Holy Spirit inspires the Synod and carries it through to its conclusion. He pointed out some of the early Fathers of the Church, St Cyril of Jerusalem and St Basil the Great for example, to show how they were inspired by the Holy Spirit in their work for the Catholic Church.

He recommended reading Pope Francis' book, *"Let us Dream – the Path to a Better Future"* which inspires us to meet the challenges of our age. Pope Francis writes, *"This is a moment to dream big, to rethink our priorities – what we value, what we want, what we seek – and to commit to act in our daily life on what we have dreamed of."* He urges us to respond to God's ever-present challenges by seeing, judging and acting with the Holy Spirit and also reminds us that the voice of God is gentle, encouraging and full of hope.

The Church speaks all languages. Unity is a key gift of the Holy Spirit.

After the lunch break, Annette Hartman presented the second part of the Retreat and began by naming Dionysius Exiguus from 325 AD, who wanted to answer the question, *When is Easter?* He is best known as the inventor of Anno Domini (AD) dating, which is used to number the years of both the Gregorian and Julian calendars. Almost all churches adopted his computus for the dates of Easter.

Annette raised the point that the Jewish day ends and the new day begins at sundown and that in the early Church, and according to the Gospel of John, the Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost all occurred on the same day. This differs from

Presenters: Fr Robert Riedling and Annette Hartman



the other Gospel stories and that covered in Acts. In the way that we move events slightly to suit what we have on at a particular time, it is thought that this is the reason for the varied accounts. It also aligns having the feast of First Fruits, a Jewish festival and feast time, with the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Why did Jesus have to go after his resurrection was a question Annette put to the group. Jesus had risen from the dead and could have stayed with His friends. In His human form, He was restrained to be in only one place at any one time. He needed to go to His Father so that the Spirit could be sent out to the entire world. —The Father and the Son's Spirit of Truth sent forth for all time.

She spoke of St Stephen, the first Martyr of the Church, that he was filled with the Holy Spirit and just before being stoned by the Jewish leaders, looked up to Heaven and saw the Glory of God and Jesus standing next to His father.

Annette also raised the following points:-

- ◆ Doors were closed in the upper room suggesting that the hearts of the apostles were closed.
- ◆ The Apostles were in fear because they hadn't seen the risen Jesus
- ◆ They are then filled with joy when they see Jesus.
- ◆ The first gift of the risen Lord is **"Peace be with you"** - peace will be solace in the face of persecution.
- ◆ Jesus breathed on them – God breathed on Adam – the intimacy of his breath connected the apostles to Jesus.
- ◆ Apostles are now new men to be witnesses for Jesus in the world.
- ◆ The apostles were sent out to complete Jesus' mission; we are also called to do likewise.
- ◆ Fire is seen as a sign of God's presence in the Old Testament – there are tongues of fire at Pentecost.
- ◆ The gift given to the apostles of understanding all languages is a reversal of the punishment of Babel.

Attending the Pentecost Retreat gave us time out of our usual lives to reflect upon and learn more about Pentecost, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and His role in our lives and the life of the Church.

We thank Fr Robert and Annette for sharing their knowledge, taking time to prepare their talks, and helping us to discuss and reflect upon the importance of this Feast.

Thanks also to Marietta and Michael for organising the Pentecost Retreat.



For Ana Lucia da Cruz's comments on the Retreat go to page 22.

The Power of the Spirit: *It matters* to Margaret Cooper,



When my husband and I were living on the Central Coast, some years ago, we attended a small Anglican Church. One year the minister suggested that we should all wear

something red on Pentecost Sunday as a symbol of the day. I remember wearing a red jumper with the logo **'Life - Be In It!'**

At the time I had no idea how appropriate those words were.

While the birth of the Saviour in Bethlehem took place in almost complete obscurity, with only a few shepherds the first to witness the event, the birth of the church over thirty years later in Jerusalem could not have been more conspicuous.

The Spirit is Jesus' legacy to the church, but I had always found those scriptures in John's Gospel relating to the Spirit as not very interesting, and tended to ignore them. I had no idea of the Spirit's work in our lives until my husband and I became involved in the Charismatic Renewal of the early 1980s. Since then, I have realised that the peace (or otherwise!) I have had over certain decisions or actions has been the prompting of the Spirit — usually quite gentle, but once or twice, very much stronger to deter me from some disastrous course of action.

Since I became a Catholic, in 2021 at the age of 92, I have realised that the Spirit has been quenched by church disputes and divisions throughout the centuries. This has limited His work as teacher and guide of the church, and so prevented a large number of believers from being weaned from a spiritual diet of milk to one of meat and maturity. (Isaiah: 26:9; I Cor: 3:1-3 ; Hebrews: 5:12-14)

Through Fr Oliver I have come to understand and recognise the peace and joy that comes in our hearts with the Holy Spirit's guidance. I am so grateful to him and to Deacon Rod Pirotta who have encouraged me on my pilgrim journey.

In Romans 15:13 St Paul hears his prayer for us all. "...that by the power of the spirit they have hope."

Good Works Matter



Rich person poor person dinner at Parramatta Mission

*Claire Pospischil was there
and shares her experience.*

Rich person poor person dinner at Parramatta Mission

Intriguing title, isn't it?

Fr Robert and I accepted the challenge to attend a function on 30 March at Parramatta Mission. The dinner event was held at the Macquarie Street site for Parramatta Mission, where hot meals, food and social support services are based for local community members experiencing homelessness and other challenges. Dinner attendees came from the Parramatta business community and other religious organisations in the area.

The concept was an audacious one by the Parramatta Mission organisers and was clearly communicated to all attendees in advance. For every eight diners, seven would be allocated as 'poor people' and be fed accordingly, while one in eight diners would be allocated as a 'rich person'.

After a few welcome speeches, attendees moved towards the dining room and drew their dinner allocation out of a hat. Both Fr Robert and I drew a 'poor person' ticket. We were allocated to trestle tables in the dining room, along with most attendees.

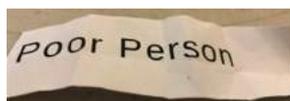
Approximately 20 attendees were allocated 'rich person' tickets. They were seated on smaller tables, with tablecloths, accompanying musicians and table serviced by Mission volunteers. These people were served first, eating a three-course dinner, along with alcoholic beverages.

Eventually the 'poor person'-allocated diners were offered dinner. We queued up outside the hall and were given dinner through a hatchery window, along with cutlery and water. Our dinner consisted of rice, tuna, peas, corn and cucumber. No alcohol and definitely no dessert! The lovely music played by a jazz band from Northmead Uniting wafted across the hall, entertaining both 'rich' and 'poor' diners alike.

We went through a de-brief post dinner. There were a broad range of views expressed. The poor diners, in general, tended to bond better on their tables and muck in with the shared experience for the evening. Some attendees allocated to rich tables found the differential food experience embarrassing. One of the 'rich' tables gave their entrees to the nearby 'poor' table. Some attendees were horrified at the contents on the poor person dinner plate and implications for community members living this way more broadly. Others were indignant that attendees didn't have an awareness of food access inequalities within the Parramatta community until attending the dinner. One attendee, who wasn't Fr Robert or me, didn't deal with the poor dinner allocation well and ordered takeaway to be delivered. He at least was willing to own up to it in front of everyone.

I'm grateful for the experience and the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of Parramatta Mission's work.

The dinner event was at times a confronting way to reflect on lived experiences of inequality in our local community, plus encounter those working to change things for the better.





Our Knowledge of Rituals Matters

The Dean explains: WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO.

Why do we have an OFFERTORY PROCESSION at Mass?

One of the parts of the Mass which is often overlooked or simply ignored by many, is the Offertory Procession. There may be a number of reasons for this, not least of which is the fact that whenever a collection is taken up at Mass (this being an opportune time for it), it can be a distraction from the procession of the gifts.

It might seem as if a procession is a formal and dignified way to get the wine and the bread to the priest over simply having these items placed at the side as on most weekday Masses. This begs the question: why do we have an offertory procession?

In one sense, it is not incorrect to say that a procession is simply a formal way to get the bread and wine to the altar for consecration. After all, if a procession were absolutely necessary then it would be obligatory, yet in most parishes we tend to see it only at Sunday Masses. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) makes it clear that a procession is not obligatory at any Mass, stating that *“It is praiseworthy for the*

bread and wine to be presented by the faithful.” (n.73) Praiseworthy, yes – essential, no.

But there is definitely something important and symbolic going on during an offertory procession.

In ancient times, people brought their own bread and wine to Mass to be consecrated by the priest celebrant. This is something we no longer do but the GIRM states that *“...nevertheless the rite of carrying up the offerings still retains its force and its spiritual significance.”* (n.73) So, the small amount of bread and wine that is brought up at the Offertory Procession is representative of offerings given by us all as a priestly people. When we think of how bread and wine are produced, we come to see more clearly that these gifts represent our labours and our prayers. In years gone by when these staple foods of the ancient world were produced at a household level, there would have been many prayers said for a bountiful harvest of grain and grapes, to say nothing of the sweat produced through the process of turning these raw materials into essential food and drink.

As one writer puts it:

“God asks us to bring something to the Eucharistic table. The bread and wine symbolise the more complete offering of our life, which is also transformed during the Mass as we become one with Jesus and are also made into his body, as members joined to the head.”

(taken from the Denver Catholic website)

And so, what we offer is transformed into something divine, the Body and Blood of Christ, which is then given back to us to help us bear fruit for the kingdom; to make the divine presence manifest to the world.

As a side note, we should not forget that money or other gifts for the poor can also be brought forward in the Offertory Procession.

So, when you next are at a Sunday Mass, try to make an effort to focus on the Offertory Procession as a significant part of the liturgy which is more than a mere “hinge” between the two parts of our Eucharistic celebration.





Ngiyani winangay ganunga

We remember them

Bob Edgar was there.



The Myall Creek Massacre Memorial, held 11th June 2023, marked the 185th anniversary of the killing of 28 Aboriginal people at Myall Creek Station near Bingara, NSW.

The massacre, actually on June 10th, itself was quite unremarkable at the time. It was just one of hundreds of such events that occurred throughout the colony and continued right up to the 1930s. In a lawless frontier far from the law and prying eyes it was considered an imperative to remove "troublesome blacks", so that the colony could continue to expand and prosper unhindered. Bored, unprincipled workers (many of them ex-convicts) in charge of these outposts considered it a sport to mistreat, abuse and murder any blacks they encountered. Indeed, if their actions came to the attention of the law, it was not punished. It was more likely to be sanctioned, or even led by the police.

Myall Creek Massacre stands out in history because it is the only one that was reported to the authorities, the only one that resulted in the perpetrators being charged, tried, convicted and executed for their actions. The trial itself created huge controversy in Sydney with the majority of the population railing against the very notion of white men being tried for killing blacks. The Sydney (Morning) Herald of the day led the charge in decrying this injustice and cried out for the men to be released. The trial itself was sensational, eleven men were acquitted. Even more sensationally the NSW Attorney General John Plunkett ordered the retrial of seven of the eleven. This time they were convicted and sentenced to death by hanging. One of the witnesses, hutkeeper George Anderson, found it necessary to disappear after the trial, for his own safety.

The Sydney Morning Herald of June 10 2023, in its editorial, gives a full and lengthy apology for their part in supporting the cause of the accused in 1838. In a separate article on the same day Peter FitzSimons reminds us that John Fleming,



organiser of the massacre, lived for another 56 years, earning a warm obituary in the Windsor and Richmond Gazette in 1894, for his service as a farmer in the Hawkesbury, church warden and Justice of the

Peace. Henry Dangar, (owner of Myall Creek), died in 1861 as one of the richest men in the colony. Commander of NSW Mounted Police, Major James Nunn, was never held to account for his role in the frontier wars, including the massacre at Waterloo Creek, (six months earlier and not far from Myall Creek).

In 2023 the Wirrayaraay and Gomeroi people welcome us to their country with music and dance. As we make our way along the serpent path to the Memorial Rock for the service we are invited to be cleansed with smoke and to have ochre applied to our face as a sign of respect and communion.

This year is the third year that Phil Russo and myself have attended the service. It gets bigger every year. It brings together people from far and near to dance, to sing, to remember. Busloads of school children come from the Gold Coast, Canberra, Sydney and the local district to participate in the event each year. The theme is remembrance, recognition and reconciliation.

To see a descendant of the victims, Aunty Sue Blacklock and a descendant of the perpetrators, Beulah Adams, - standing arm-in-arm (see picture above), is truly humbling and gives us hope that the upcoming referendum on *The Voice* will see a just outcome. We will walk forward together.

The Memorial's theme: remembrance, recognition and reconciliation.

ST PATRICK'S PLAYGROUP MATTERS

Regrettably this 'update' by Gabrielle Fox, is a Hail and Farewell one, a swansong as she ends her period as Coordinator of the Playgroup.

Hello to you all,

Have you seen the young children running on the grass in the Cloister? Heard the faint singing of 'Twinkle, twinkle little star' coming from the hall? Or perhaps you were passed by the pram squad strolling down the ramps? It's Wednesday morning and it's Playgroup Day!

Hi, my name is Gabrielle, I have been coordinating the weekly play dates with my three children. Maybe you've seen them racing each other to the Parish Office at 9:45am yelling "Donna, Donna!", each one hoping Donna will gift them with the responsibility of the hall keys to open the doors for another day of fun and play.

The end of June 2023 marks one year since playgroup's return to the Cloister Cafe at the Cathedral. Playgroups like a lot of other gatherings were cancelled until further notice due to COVID-19. For St Pat's it was a three year hiatus. As this is the only playgroup running in Parramatta, it was fantastic to finally open the doors and welcome people in.

For ten years a lady named Diane Jaitani volunteered as coordinator. But as restrictions lightened and the time came to start up again, her children were no longer playgroup age and she could not find volunteers who were able to step in.

In January 2022, my family moved to the Parramatta area having lived overseas during COVID-19 and enduring the lockdowns there. The impact of the pandemic's restrictions for me shone a light on the need to belong and the

fulfilment I feel from being a part of community. I joined a few community groups over the first few months. It was good timing with St Pat's. Within an hour of joining the St Pat's Playgroup Facebook Page an update came through from Diane. The playgroup couldn't continue without volunteers. I was looking to volunteer and here was my immediate opportunity.

St Pat's Playgroup has reached almost 60 play dates. I can proudly say we've taken no sick days! I call it "Well Wednesdays". If my kids do fall sick they are always well by Wednesday because that's playgroup and no one wants to miss out.

We have had new faces attending each week. And we have regulars; families that have come along since the beginning. On average there would be 12 families attend each week. We set up toys and activities for ages 0-5. The majority of parents are sitting on the floor where the action is, watching their children and mingling with others.

I wanted to share a quote with you. "A community is a group of people that choose to grow together". At playgroup there are more obvious things like reaching milestones; babies sitting to crawling, crawling to walking, or walking to talking. And we support and celebrate these milestones together because these families continue to show up. It's a good feeling.

Playgroup runs on Wednesdays during school term. It's 10:00am - 11:30am in the Cloister Cafe/Function Room. We play, sing, dance, do playdough, pop balloons and so much more. If there is



anyone you know that might be interested, please do pass on our day and times or they can email: stpatsplaygroup@outlook.com

I wanted to say thank you to those friendly faces that wave and say hello. And those that come in and enquire for their sons and daughters to bring their little ones.

But this article for me is a reflective piece. This week we received news that my husband has secured work in Queensland. My time here has come to an end. We will continue until mid June and then hand over the baton to the next co-ordinator to lead. So we might say, "see you later, alligator".....you never know.

Thank you St Pat's!

GABRIELLE'S GOOD NEWS NEW CO-ORDINATORS VOLUNTEER



Monique Koehler (L) & Taymer Waqa (R)

These two lovely ladies have agreed to take up the baton of leadership of St Pat's Playgroup.

So great that they are happy to ensure Gabrielle's legacy will continue to bear fruit.



Happy Playgroupers at the gathering on Wednesday 14th June, but sad to be farewelling Gabrielle

On Tuesday, 11 April 2023, I experienced a near-drowning, and it was only through the intercession of God that my young son and I survived and are alive today.

My wife, our two sons and I were on a short holiday on the South Coast of New South Wales. The last day of our holiday I took our sons to the beach to play and go for a swim. Surf conditions that day were not good, and at nearby Shell Harbour, there was a swell of 3.1 metres.

We played safely in the shallow surf about five metres from the shore for one to two hours. I could see sand being churned heavily about 10 metres to the right of us and assumed this was a strong rip being generated by the heavy swell and strong currents. We steered clear of this area.

My eldest son asked if we could go in deeper, and against my better judgement, I agreed. We waded out further, but the rip was wider and stronger than expected, and we were both caught in it. We were both ocean-facing and, for about a minute, were unaware that we were in the rip until we could not touch the bottom. The rip had pulled out all the sand from the sandbar. Turning around I saw we were about 30 metres or so from shore.

My family and I have watched many episodes of Bondi Rescue over the years, so I quickly realised the gravity of our situation. I raised my hand to signal for help and yelled to my youngest son and another person on the beach for help. My hand still raised, I yelled at my son to "swim across!" to try and escape the rip.

Luckily a local man, called Dean, a former lifesaver and his wife, a former nurse driving on a road that overlooks the beach, saw my son and I in the rip, and recognising my hand in the air as a sign of distress, pulled over and ran to the beach.

My son and I are good swimmers, but the strength of the rip going back out to the ocean combined with the relentless large waves on top resulted in us being constantly rolled under – like being in a washing machine. After what seemed like 5-10 minutes of struggling in the rip, I was taking in significant amounts of water and could not surface for air. I remembered thinking "I didn't think I would go out this way." I knew I had about 1-2 minutes of life left, and the faces of my wife and two

sons flashed before me underneath the waves.

I felt pangs of regret that I would not be there to see them grow up. I have read stories about fathers who die and leave their wife and children behind. I did not want to be one of those fathers, though I was not afraid of dying. As a deeply spiritual person, I look forward to returning home to God when He calls me, and over the decades I've read of many beautiful divine near-death experiences.

But I felt it was not my time. I had a choice between giving up and leaving this life or fighting and staying here. For my family, I made the choice to stay. Surfacing I prayed to Mother Mary and Archangel Michael for help. I remember stretching my left arm out in a short break between the waves and looking up at the clouds. My prayer for help was not strong; it was desperate and failing.

Then another set of waves pummelled and rolled me under water, and I came up one last time. At that moment, Dean appeared in the waves next to me. I didn't know who he was or where he'd come from, but I could tell he was a strong swimmer and I felt my prayer had been answered. He told my son and I to lie on our backs to help conserve energy and to try and float closer to shore with the help of the breaking waves.

Dean had to make the difficult choice of saving my son or me, because the strong rip and surf meant he couldn't save both of us at the same time. He had to decide who had the best chance of survival. He made the right choice and went to save my son.

One more set of waves rolled over me, and I remember being tossed around like a rag doll. I could not reach the surface for air, and I lost consciousness and blacked out under the waves.

Eyewitnesses later told me that Dean grabbed my son as he laid on his back in the surf and swam with him across the rip. They then fought their way back to near shore, to a point where another local called Lindsay was able to come out with the aid of a surfboard and bring my son to shore.

Then turning back to the ocean he could

see me still in the waves, but realised that if he attempted to swim out to rescue me he would likely not survive as he was heavily fatigued and had taken in seawater rescuing my son.

At this time, I was somehow pulled sideways out of the rip, which should have taken me further out to sea, which is where rip currents normally flow, and was carried across another stretch of water where I was positioned closer to some nearby rocks extending from the beach out into the water.

From the shore, Dean realised he now had a chance to get closer and ran out onto the rocks. Another set of waves broke, which could have taken me further out, or closer to the rocks. By the grace of God, they carried me directly towards Dean. At that moment the waves stopped and the sea pulled back to reveal a rock ledge and Dean was able to climb onto to reach out to grab me. He pulled me out of the surf and onto the ledge but was unable to lift me as he was heavily fatigued from the first rescue. Later he told me I felt like a "dead weight".

The waves came back in and instead of smashing us against the rocks, they lifted us both up onto the rocks. By this time others had gathered on the beach, and they ran out to assist, dragging me across the rocks and carrying me onto the beach. As I hit the sand I regained consciousness. I struggled to breathe, I had taken in a lot of water, but I was alive!

My rescuers carried me further up the beach to a local lifesaver, who had come across from a neighbouring beach with an oxygen tank. My oxygen levels were critically low and Dean's wife assisted the lifesaver with giving me oxygen. I began to recover, vomiting heavily to expel the seawater from my stomach. By this time three ambulances, three police cars, as well as a helicopter had arrived. After stabilising me the paramedics loaded me into an ambulance for transfer to the local base hospital.

I was taken to the emergency department, put on a high flow oxygen ventilator and given other treatment to help bring my oxygen levels back to normal.

Continued next page

Here, Modern Mary, broaches just one of the many challenges faced by modern mums – teaching their children how to deal with conflict management. In today's increasingly secular society, violence and lack of respect for others are alarmingly becoming the norm. She turns to the Scriptures for help.

The trials and tribulations of modern motherhood are infinite. The big challenges always surprise you in those phases of transition as they grow. My boys are 7 and 11. We've moved on from the mess and chaos of early childhood to 'mess and chaos whilst screaming'.

A fresh surge of testosterone is gifted to us from 10 onwards, just to keep things interesting. We wouldn't want parents to get bored. And my younger son is no better in terms of regulating his emotions and frustrations as he comes into his own identity and autonomy. So now I have two increasingly aggressive mini-men to teach conflict management to. When you're not in control, how does that make you feel? When you're angry, how can you respond by expressing your feelings rather than responding with violence? How can you be kind?

It has been the hardest thing to teach them so far (mainly because trauma erases any memory of the preceding difficult phases). I don't begrudge Putin's Mum for not teaching him how to deal with conflict and control. God rest her soul, she only just passed away last month (May 2023) at the age of 96, despite Putin claiming that his parents were both dead prior to his Presidency. Although, pondering this, if I were her, I wouldn't mind that son of mine claiming I was dead. Wikipedia says that it was around this phase in his childhood (aligned with the start of surging testosterone) that this poor Georgian woman was forced to give her son up to others to care for, upon the insistence of her new husband.

So poor Vera never had a chance to have the 'what to do when you feel angry' talk. And now here we are. At the mercy of some mini-men with feelings they can't appropriately express.

My latest attempts with my boys involve me helping them to identify their insecurities. What is the ultimate fear behind that loss of control? What happens when you're not in the position of power? Let's be clear, the battle is over a soccer ball. But one day, it'll be over something much bigger. These days, they look at me as though I'm mad for speaking to them like participants in a corporate conflict management course.

This is where Scripture achieves what I cannot. By framing these challenges in the context of love and kindness, to overcome self-righteousness and hate. It's a message even a growing child can understand. In the end, I can only pray for my boys. — For the men they will become and the future they will inherit.

Share your stories with us at modernmarymums@gmail.com

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

Craig Donaldson's story from page 20

I had swallowed a lot of seawater and my left lung had partially collapsed. I also suffered kidney failure and the doctors said later that the initial blood test analysis resembled someone who was clinically dead and resuscitated.

My wife and close family friends were at my bedside, praying the Our Father, Hail Mary and Psalm 91. The strength that flowed into me from holding my wife's hand as we prayed together was extraordinarily tangible and powerful. My breathing deepened and my body regained significant strength as I felt the power of God flow into me through our prayers united.

After three days in hospital, I was discharged. I am now home, fully recovered and very grateful.

God's Hand was evident in many ways on that fateful day.

From Dean passing at the exact time I had my hand in the air for help and then turning up in the waves less than a minute after my praying for help, to him rescuing my son and then having the ocean carry me directly to him for my rescue, God saved our lives that day.

The waves should have smashed us against the rocks, but they lifted us up out of the ocean to safety. The sea made way for Dean to reach me and rescue me. Dragged across rough rocks away from the surf, my back should have been full of cuts and bruises, but it was unmarked. (Dean later told me said the rescuers' feet should have been all cut up too, but were unharmed).

Hospital doctors said my blood test results resembled someone who was clinically dead and then resuscitated (though no resuscitation was performed). The emergency department doctors told my wife I would likely be on oxygen for at

least a couple of weeks, if not months. By God's grace, and the many prayers that were offered for me, I was on oxygen for only two days. My lungs were healed quickly and my kidneys have regained full working function.

The message in all of this is that we need to trust and surrender to God, all of the time – not just call to Him when we are in trouble. Start your day with prayer and surrender. Bend your knee before Him first thing in the day and invite Him into your life. Ask Him to be part of your day and to guide and protect you in everything you do. The currents of life will sometimes carry you in unexpected directions, but He can lift you out of danger and carry you to safety. The sea obeyed His command without question that day, and when you give God power to act in your life, miracles can happen.

PRAISE GOD!

Hospitality Matters

June was **STEWARDSHIP MONTH**, launched to encourage parishioners to reflect on how to use their gifts of **Time Talent and Treasure** to build up the parish community, in the spirit of genuine discipleship.

Well, members of the Hospitality Team certainly give of their time volunteering to serve in the Cloister Café on Sundays.



Above Edward, Leonard, Pat and Dorothy pose either side of young newcomer Chelsea after finishing their duty.



↑ Here Pat Tenido, second from left is posing post-duty with the people she is responsible for convincing to join the team, to give of their time as one way of serving the parish community. From L-R: Rose and Mon, Evelyn and Miriam.

Impressively, Pat's and Dorothy's tenure of service dates back to circa 1996, post-fire when Mass was celebrated in the Pro-Cathedral and Morning Tea was held in the Grotto Café, (But that's another story.)

Edward and Leonard have notched up quite a few years of volunteering, while Pat is relatively 'newish', but seems committed to giving of time to dispense hospitality.

Many other members of the Team have been committed to long-time service in this parish outreach.

A personal reflection point was offered in the bulletin to help discerning response to Stewardship:

"How do I see the giving of my time, talent and treasure to my parish as an offering of love to both my fellow parishioners and my God."

Well, joining the Hospitality Team could be one way of offering time as an offering of love to St Pat's parishioners and visitors.

If you feel called to serve in this ministry, contact the Parish Office to be put in touch with the Co-Ordinator of the Hospitality Team.



Looking Back Matters



Whilst a report on *St Patrick's Day* post-event, did not eventuate, this photo collage bears testimony to parishioners giving of their Time, Talent and Treasure for our community's benefit.





Monsignor John Boyle, now retired, was Parish Priest and Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral from 1991 to 2000. On occasion he comes to celebrate Sunday Mass at the Cathedral.

Here he is seen at a 9:30am Mass calling the children to come forward to attend the Children's Liturgy, which is held in the hall. Regulars at this Mass are familiar with seeing the children being called up to attend a liturgical session directed specifically to their level of understanding: where a 'leader parishioner' helps them engage with the Gospel in 'child speak'.

Parents, new to the parish, encourage your children to join this group. They return after the prayers of the Faithful and prior to the Offertory Procession.

This ministry is made possible by the dedicated band of parishioners led by Co-ordinator Kirrily Aguilera, who take on this role each week, teaching 'the little ones' about the Faith.



Meet the Zeait Family:
Firm in the Faith.

Parents Peter and Marta, along with their 5 beautiful daughters — Gianna, Genevah, Lucia, Eloise and Grace often delight attendees at 6:30am Mass by their presence. Considering that the family lives at North Rocks, it is impressive that the parents are able to get all the girls up, dressed and ready to depart for the Cathedral so early in the morning!

Such wonderful witnesses! May other parents be inspired by Peter and Marta, who, with unswerving dedication, daily fulfill the crucial role as their children's first teachers in the faith.



Not everyone was present this day. Numbers are increasing and the group includes a wide age range. The Meditation takes place in the Parish Office on Tuesdays from 9:30am for about one hour.

Don't know what to expect? Just come along to suss out what it's all about. No obligation, just turn up. You will find it a safe, welcoming space where friendships are made and support is found if it is needed.

THE PENTECOST RETREAT:

Ana Lucia da Cruz's Feedback



Ana read about the retreat in St Patrick's Sunday Bulletin. And because of her positive experience she is prepared to encourage others to attend next year's Pentecost Retreat.

When asked, 'What struck you most?' she commented, 'Annette's lecture on the second part of the retreat was very informative. It brought to my attention important details of the history involving the Resurrection and Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that I had not heard before. It also urged me to reflect about my own actions following Pentecost.'

Corpus Christi Procession



At the conclusion of 11am Mass, on 11th June, celebrating the **SOLEMNITY of the MOST HOLY BODY and BLOOD of CHRIST**, Father Chris del Rosario carried the Blessed Sacrament in procession around the cloister down to the forecourt, returning to the Cathedral via the main entrance.

WALKING with CHRIST were the Choir singing the stirring hymn, "*Sweet Sacrament Divine*", with the Faithful joining in. People followed the procession into the Chapel where the Blessed Sacrament was placed on the altar and incensed by Fr Chris. It was a powerful sight to witness: the faithful reverently kneeling or standing in silence before the Lord in Adoration. Benediction over the people was a fitting conclusion to the sacred ceremony.

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'Our faith teaches that
Jesus Christ is truly, really and substantially present,
Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Eucharistic Host,
yet our senses tell us that the host we receive both looks and tastes like a wafer.
The preparation and action to receive Our Lord is already difficult,
the leap of faith is even greater.'

(quote from Fr Chris' reflection in the Sunday Bulletin, 11th June in which he referenced the children receiving their First Eucharist)

