

ST PAT'S MATTERS

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



Ready **TO SERVE**

JULY 2024 | ISSUE 120

EDITORIAL

Drum roll please! Exciting times ahead with the formation of the new Pastoral Parish Council.

Thanks to the eight members for their input, by way of introducing themselves to the parish community they wish to serve.

Viewing the feature about the First Holy Communicants might transport readers back to the special day they received Jesus for the first time.

On the ministry front discover what is happening with our SREs, and read Deacon David's interview with Catholic Outlook about his role as a permanent deacon.

The Pospischils feature on two fronts: Claire reporting about the Memorial Service for the Homeless, while Steven informs us about the importance of biodiversity and how we Catholics can contribute.

St Patrick's Cemetery features twice Bob Edgar reports on actions by the *Friends* group and Silvana Rechichi focuses on the family history behind the Scheggia Tombstones.

Judith Dunn's article traces in great detail the history of St Vincent's Boys Home and the Marist legacy.

In Formation Matters Phillip and Felicia share their experience of the Pentecost Retreat, and facilitator Marietta presents an overview.

Check out what transpired at the two morning teas for our Seniors. Then see our pastoral outreach in action as Belinda and Dorothy visit housebound long-time parishioner, Jan Van Rys.

Antonio, the initiator of the Men's Rosary Group writes about the importance of this popular devotion.

Check out the people who feature in the Hospitality article as well as Susanna's report on Credo's recent social gathering for young adults.

See how you fare in the musically themed crossword that Bernard took delight in submitting.

Finally it was a privilege to include a fond farewell to Bishop Emeritus Kevin Manning, who went to his eternal rest on Monday, 15th July.

M. Polizzi

A New Chapter in Our Parish Leadership: A New Pastoral Parish Council is formed

A long and involved process, under the guidance of the Dean, Fr Robert Riedling, has finally culminated in the formation of the new PASTORAL PARISH COUNCIL, (PPC). This way forward began back in early April, with detailed information published in Sunday bulletins over many weeks to enlighten and educate parishioners as to all this entailed.

Let's recap the stages through which the process progressed.

In the bulletin of 7th April, it was announced "As a vibrant community of faith, we stand on the threshold of an exciting new chapter. The Cathedral's Parish Pastoral Council has not convened in recent years, The time has now arrived to look forward and assemble a new PPC, reinvigorating our parish leadership with fresh perspectives....."

In 14th April's bulletin parishioners learnt: **Why a Parish Pastoral Council?**

The PPC serves as a vital part of our parish's life, providing counsel to the pastor and leadership team on matters concerning the pastoral mission of our parish. Its purpose is to foster community, encourage spiritual growth, initiate programs and activities that reflect the Gospel's call to love and service. The council plays a crucial role in discerning the needs of our parish community, advising on strategic direction, and supporting the implementation of our parish's pastoral plan.

The **call for nominations** was a unique opportunity for those feeling called to serve in a deeper way within our parish, perhaps with parishioners considering either nominating themselves, or someone they believed 'has the vision, commitment, and love for St Pat's to be a member of the new PPC.'

The Information/Discernment Night, 1st May was an evening of prayer, reflection, and information about the role and function of the PPC and what was expected of its members. For those who accepted the invitation it was the first step in discerning if they were called to serve and contribute to the parish's mission and governance.

The Nomination Process: officially opened on the Discernment/Information Night, at which details on how to nominate were provided. From 2nd May, nominations forms were available in the narthex and at all entrances to the Cathedral. The deadline for submissions was 5pm, Friday, 10th May.

12th May Bulletin: PPC Nomination Update: *We are grateful for the enthusiastic response and the willingness of our community members to serve in this important capacity. Shortly, the nomination committee will be engaging in conversations with all the nominees. These discussions are a crucial step in understanding the nominees' visions and aspirations for our parish.*

26th May Bulletin: The Nominations Committee interviewing the 16 applicants, reported that *the selection process was challenging, due to the high quality of all nominees.....each bringing unique gifts and talents that are invaluable to being part of the PPC and serving the community.* All the nominees were thanked for their courage and willingness to be considered for this important role.

2nd June Bulletin: We thank all nominees for their courage and dedication..... While not all could be selected, we encourage everyone to continue leading and participating in other parish groups. Your contributions are vital to our parish, and we look forward to working with you to strengthen our community. The successful candidates have been notified. They have accepted their positions and we will publish the committee members on Fr Robert's return from leave.

30th June Bulletin: We are pleased to announce the newly formed Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) for our parish. After a rigorous selection process, we have chosen a dedicated group of parishioners to lead and guide our community [new members named here]We are excited about the energy and vision this group brings to our parish.

See who are the new PPC members on page 3

Congratulations to the members forming St Pat's new PPC

After a rigorous selection process, these 8 parishioners have been chosen to lead and guide our community.

*Aileen Bernardo, Martin Graham, Kerry Giumelli, Susanna Lotoaniu
Claire Pospischil, Helena Roumanus, Anne Stanton, John Starkey*

Their vision and commitment to serving St Pat's community are invaluable.

Please pray for our new PPC members as they embark on this important journey, offering them our full support as they work to strengthen and enrich our parish's life.

Claire Poapischil writes:



I am honoured to have been recently selected to join the Parish Pastoral Council. I hold a strong connection to the cathedral parish and have 'had a go' at multiple ministry roles in 20 odd years. I am proud to have many members of the community as dear friends.

Reflecting on how I have got to this point, I note an April 2021 Twitter post from then newly arrived Fr Robert as being key. The content discussed faith practice as 'academic versus existential'. Reflecting on this post rocked me to my core and I was very uncomfortable. However, this experience has spurred me to reflect and explore my faith practices more deliberately.

In the past two years I have been involved in both establishing the parish's Social Justice Group and attending the Diocesan Synod. Faith-wise, I feel a strong unstructured call to those at the margins of society and am keen to continue to explore what our wonderful parish community can do to support those in greatest need.

As a parent of two young blokes and part of the Team who lead the Children's Liturgy during 9:30am Mass on Sundays, I also have a keen interest in ministry to our younger cohort.

I'll finish up with a reflection I have heard a couple of times in Fr Robert's homilies. Imagine: if the cathedral precinct buildings remained, but for some reason the parish community was no longer here, would we be missed by the broader Parramatta community? I ponder this frequently.

Along with my fellow parish council members, I am here to listen to you and represent your views. I am excited to see what we can do over the coming three years to build up the cathedral parish community, striving to be God's head, heart and hands.

Anne Stanton:



In replying to the editor's request for an article, Anne explained: I have to apologise as I don't think I can make it, given the short time constraints. I am currently doing a summer intensive course for my Master's Programme for Theology and Philosophy, along with 'mum life', caring for 8-month old Faustina. I have a lot of assignments to do (having to submit 2x essays weekly for the next 3 weeks). So I must admit, it would be too much to cope with right now.

Editor's Note: The courses Anne mentions will undoubtedly be of great value in equipping her for her role in the PPC.

John Starkey writes:



St Patrick's is my spiritual home. I started attending St Patrick's in late 1981 just prior to Dianne's and my marriage, so just under 43 years ago. Dianne and I have been involved with RCIA since 2016-2017, first for me to be confirmed a Catholic and then as part of the RCIA Team. It gives me great joy to continue to help spread the Good News of the Gospel.

So why did I consider putting myself forward for the PPC? At the time of the advertisements in the parish bulletin for nominations to the PPC, Dianne and I were formulating plans for our retirement and I started wondering what the PPC might be. Dianne told me she thought I would be a good fit. When I asked Father Robert what was involved he said I should come along to the Information Night. So I did. I started reflecting that this might be something that I had the skills or gifts and experience to do. But I had self-doubts also. Dianne said pray on it. A couple of other parishioners were also very encouraging. So, I prayed often that the Holy Spirit would give me direction. This process might be called discernment. I prayed that my life experiences could help other people find themselves in God. And it wasn't until just before applications closed that I felt the Holy Spirit give me the nudge to submit my name! I believe all of us have something to contribute, and that by the Grace of God through the Holy Spirit, we will find a way.

St Patrick's Parish is already a vibrant and caring community and I would like to see this continue and extend by increasing the Ministry of "Welcome" to parishioners and others in our community. I would encourage the PPC to support parishioners to expand the good works of the Church through the Social Justice Ministry. I would encourage parishioners to evangelise and bring enquirers who might like to become Catholic to the RCIA. We can all offer the invitation to others, then let the Holy Spirit complete the work. I would also like to support our Youth Ministry, encouraging our young people to be committed to being Catholic by staying true to the Faith.

- Since being selected the eight have met
- for at least two formation sessions.
- There have also been discussions relating
- to the frequency of meetings and their
- format and terms of office.
- It will be very special to be present at the
- Mass when they are commissioned!

More members of St Pat's new PPC

Martin Graham writes:



It's an exciting if uncertain moment in the life of the church and I offered myself for selection on the parish pastoral council to assist our parish community to set its direction for the coming few years.

The journey is both uncertain and exciting because we make our future path as we walk it together. Who we are

to be, and what we are to do, is something to be discovered, not without difficulty, but nevertheless with confidence.

We continue in Parramatta from great foundations built by generations since the early 1800s and I know the Holy Spirit is always ready to inspire and challenge us as we look forward.

My background is in education, psychology and religious life, and I value the power of listening to one another carefully and collaborating to find our way while holding on to the best we already have been given. I have been here since the early 2000s and enjoy contributing in the choir, cooking barbecues and helping with other parish events. I have made many friends here.

In our time, there is a world-wide flowering in the church of encouraging every baptised person, regardless of rank, to find their own identity as active agents in communicating the Good News. By living it daily, more in action than word, and united with one another despite any differences that could divide us, we will be influential in the parish and wider community, revealing the kingdom among us.

In community we can support one another to take up our mission by providing the formation we need to help us become better witnesses.

The PPC can draw from many sources (not least our own parishioners and parish team) to help us dream of a better future, and every parishioner can play their part through ongoing dialogue and prayer to draw out the practical consequences that follow from the vision of a lively and life-giving church at St Pat's.

Susanna Loto'aniu writes



If someone had asked me a year ago about becoming a member of the Pastoral Parish Council, (PPC), I would definitely had informed them that it was not for me.

Now a year has passed and I would like to think I have evolved both mentally and spiritually, but I want to fuel my spirituality even in more depth! The moment I

decided to consider nominating myself to become a member of the PPC was truly a moment I allowed my faith to guide me!

This was a challenge I wanted to give myself without any hesitations, or allowing fear to creep in, as this was something out of my comfort zone. However, knowing that I am taking this step with Jesus Christ leading the way reassures me.

Helena Roumanus writes:



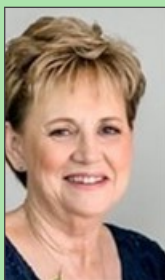
I am a wife and mother of four. My family and I have been attending St Pat's for about eight years now.

I am passionate about evangelisation and bringing people closer to Christ. I hope that I can use my gifts and talents to help our community grow in our call to be disciples.

I currently work with the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation, specifically within the *Life, Marriage and Family* office. I enjoy reading, listening to podcasts and playing with my kids.

I'm excited to be serving St Patrick's Cathedral community as part of the PPC. I hope to fairly represent the laity that I sit amongst in the pews. I would love to hear more from other parishioners about what they feel the needs are of our Cathedral community, so please feel free to strike up a conversation when you see me around.

Kerry Giumelli writes



I am a member of the recently formed St Patrick's Parish Pastoral Council. My family and I have been members of the St Patrick's Parish community for over 30 years.

For me parish is more than a place where we come to Mass every Sunday; it is also a place where we work together to communicate our love and the values and teachings of Christ in our world. We each have our role to play in this mission to bring God's Kingdom to those around us.

Everyone has their own way of doing this. We all have gifts and talents to share and build community. I feel that the Parish Pastoral Council is a way I can support the development of a vibrant Christian community at St Patrick's, working together to respond to the hopes and concerns of the parish. With the current focus on synodality we all work together with our priests to build a community that highlights faith, worship and service.

I look forward to joining the other members in the PPC in this important work.

Psalm 23 is my favourite psalm. A line in it that particularly resonates with me in regard to my applying for the PPC position is "*the Lord is my Good Shepherd, I lack nothing*". I include this in my prayers too. So even if it happened that I wasn't selected I wouldn't get upset about it, but instead know that He will continue to guide me to what is for me. (Psalms 23:1).

My family were parishioners during my time at St Patrick's Primary School. My heart has always remained here and recently I have become involved in the Credo Young Adults Group and also joined the Hospitality Group.

As a PPC member, my wish is to be a person encouraging and helping a brother/sister in staying faithful, walking as a child of God in a world that dictates otherwise the way to live.

Aileen Bernardo writes



Reflecting on what to write in this introduction as a member of the newly appointed Parish Pastoral Council, I found myself a little stuck. I'm not usually someone lost for words, but after some

contemplation, my efforts still resulted in a blank page. Then a reminder from Marian Polizzi came and I knew I had to get a move along.

So, after some more prayer, asking for divine intervention, here is a little about me and why I am honoured to serve you as part of the PPC.

Firstly, who am I? My name is Aileen Bernardo. I may look familiar to you if you are a Sunday 11.00am mass goer. I am a wife, a mother to three teenagers, a migrant from a Filipino family, who arrived in Western Sydney 42 years ago. I have grown up in the Parramatta Diocese and have been part of the St Patrick's Parish for almost 14 years.

I nominated to be part of the PPC because first and foremost, I believe Christ calls all of us to share whatever He has given us with others...and He has blessed me with so much, that I can't just sit passively on the sidelines, and watch others do the work that He needs done.

I also believe God speaks to us through those around us. So, when I have parishioners and a priest come up to me suggesting I fill out the nomination form, I thought, maybe He was also trying to tell me something!

I am both encouraged and excited to serve the St Pat's community through the Parish Pastoral Council. We have a great opportunity as a parish to grow together as true companions on this journey. As a member of the PPC, I hope to contribute to our parish becoming better connected to live out the mission Christ has given us.

At our PPC meeting on 16 July, Fr Robert gave us our appointment letter. It made official that we are all members of the PPC for the next three years. I do not yet know what the next three years will hold. I do have a vision, a hope that three years from now, St Pat's will be an even more vibrant parish than it is today; a parish that is a hive of activity, where we all feel we belong, where our faith is nourished and where we help others in our broader community to find themselves in our Lord.

I look forward to serving our parish through the PPC and getting to know other parishioners along the way.

The Permanent Diaconate Matters



Having served in this ministry for almost 18 months, *Catholic Outlook* recently spoke with Deacon David Dowling about what he has enjoyed in his ministry.

Permission has been granted to reproduce Mary Brazell's interview with him in *St Pat's Matters*.

What has been a highlight of your first year as a permanent deacon?

Deacon David Dowling: It's really difficult to pick out a particular highlight. Every part of being a deacon has been so fulfilling. I love serving at the altar, I love being able to proclaim the Word, I love being with the parishioners pastorally, being able to offer them accompaniment and blessing them when they ask. But if I had to pick one thing, it would be having the opportunity to break open the Word and give homilies that try to connect the Scriptures to people's lived lives in a real and relational way.

How has your parish placement been?

I've been based at St Patrick's Cathedral and the priests and the parishioners have been so welcoming and supportive. Serving at the Cathedral was a bit daunting – they have very high standards and expectations, but they also offer lots of support and encouragement so it has worked out fine.

How would the parishioners where you are serving describe you?

You would have to ask them that. Mostly they have been very kind and encouraging in their feedback although a small number may have found some of my homilies a bit challenging – when I believe the Scriptures are calling us to be challenged, I say it as I see it, and not everybody loves that. Mostly though, people have been really encouraging.

What has been something that you have learnt about yourself over your first year in ministry?

I have been very surprised at how much I love serving at the altar. My journey to the diaconate was through lay ministry and I had never served as an acolyte, but I really love being so physically involved in the liturgies. It has brought them to life for me in a way I had not experienced before.

How has your wife and family supported you through this first year of ministry?

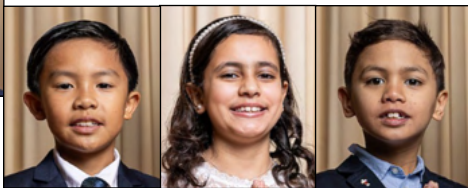
My wife has always supported me right through my journey of growing in faith and ministry, and she continued the very same way this year. I could never have taken the journey I have without her incredible support. My kids love to give me a hard time about being a deacon, but they would undoubtedly do that no matter what I would do! Underneath, they are really supportive.

What do you hope your second year of being a deacon will bring?

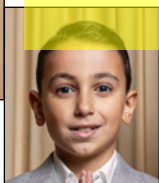
Within the next nine months, I hope to finish the last of my studies. That will free up significant time and I am looking forward to discerning what God's will is for me to use that time. I am a serious fan of what Alpha brings to a parish, so part of me hopes God will call me to assist with getting that started, but He may well have better ideas. Time will tell.... One way or another, I am looking forward to stepping in more and more deeply to my vocation as a deacon.

SACRAMENTS MATTERS

We received Jesus for the first time.



The Feast of Corpus Christi and Sunday 9th June were days of great joy for these 40 children, who made their First Holy Communion — receiving Jesus in The Eucharist. For their families: a milestone event to celebrate and remember as the day their children received the second sacrament of Initiation into the Catholic Faith.



THESE CHILDREN SHOW US



HOW TO RECEIVE JESUS:



WITH HUMILITY



WITH GREAT JOY



WITH REVERENCE



WITH AWE AND WONDER

SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION MATTER

These 40 children, having been baptized and received their First Holy Communion will next prepare to be confirmed, CONFIRMATION being the third Sacrament which completes their initiation into the Catholic Faith. Parishioners are exhorted to pray for them and their parents as they continue the journey to the final 'milestone'.

- 
- Antoun Emmanuel Abboud
 - Bianca Abdou
 - Zoe Joan Aguilera
 - Elizabeth Atkins
 - Isaac Barber
 - Bastian Bianchi Mucza
 - Rielle Kanna Blas
 - Ariana Bousimon
 - Olivia Estelle Buenaventura
 - Liam Buenaventura
 - Nicholas Chu
 - Zara Marce Ciampi
 - Marley Rita Cutugno
 - Flynn Davis
 - Pierre Andrew El Bageh
 - William Elias
 - Danny John Fagad
 - Matzo Paul Delos Santos Fortaleza
 - Krystal Harries
 - Gabriel Anthony Higoy
 - Adrian Gabriel Jreij
 - Natalie Kahwaji
 - Mario Marijan Matz Kancijanic
 - Sebastian Lewis
 - Emily Lin
 - Mika Liu
 - Malka Olivia Llorador
 - Leonardo Paul Mahongy
 - Angelina Malia Moujalli
 - Aidan Murphy
 - Riley Ramon
 - Aragorn Cris Romero
 - Olivia Sahgoun
 - Jessica Selvenraja
 - Albie Henry Soh
 - Oskar Tudberry
 - Sizra Usman
 - Athna Flor Valencia
 - Hanna Mary Wehbz
 - Leah Ciara Wijesekara Jayawardena
- 

HOLY COMMUNION –

The BIGGER Picture

A Reflection



Flicking through old photos is always a great family past time; nothing gives people greater pleasure than to look back on bad fashion choices, laugh at a face caught off guard, and ponder the rise of the mullet hairstyle.

There's always an odd tension in our hearts when we look at old photographs though.

Part of us wishes we were back there in that exact time and place, part of us hopes to re-live similar memories with people we love, and part of us recognises how thankful we are for life at this exact moment.

One photograph, in one moment of remembrance, draws together a lifetime of love from the past, present, and future. In the Cathedral there are no photos, but we don't need any. Whenever we come together to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we don't commemorate Christ's acts in salvation history as if we were looking at a photograph — longing for someone who isn't here.

We bow our heads, close our eyes, and kneel, because we are in the true presence, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, of the same God who loved us enough to die for us so that we may be one with Him.

This oneness is what makes the Eucharist the source and summit of the Christian life, because when we truly and deeply love someone, we want to be identified as one with them.

Think of married couples, families, or even dear friends. Often, they speak of their relationships as if everyone involved was one person – “we believe this”, “we only support the Eels”; Love craves unity.

Our God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in faithful love and constancy, asks us to come into this Holy Communion with Him so that we may abide in Him and He in us; so that we may be everything He is, to one another.

It is the purest expression of love: Christ died for our sins, rose for our hope in eternal life, and makes Himself present every day in the Eucharist: One Sacrament, in one Mass of remembrance, drawing together a lifetime of love from the past, present, and future.

We don't need a camera to capture the memory of the moment, when the moment is continuous, and the one we love is always there.

*Olivia Lee was 23, a St Pat's parishioner and at Campion College when she wrote this reflection as one in a series, **Snippets of Sacraments**, which were featured in the parish's Sunday Bulletin over seven weekends.*

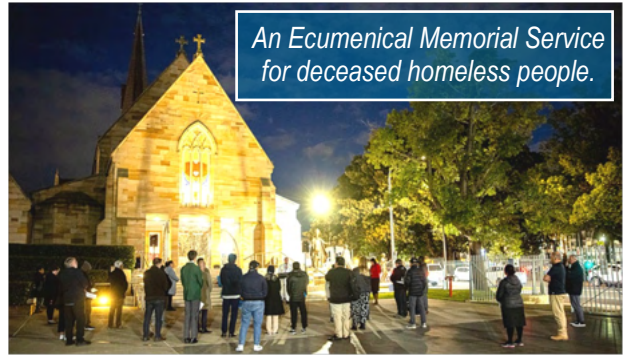
At the time, Fr Andrew Bass was Administrator and had asked Olivia to pen the reflections. During her time at St Pat's she was instrumental in initiating the Youth Group, and was chair of the Pastoral Parish Council, to name just two areas of service. Olivia, daughter of Mili Lee, the Cathedral Parish Manager, is now 32 and works for Our Lady of Dolours Parish, Chatswood.

See 2 Milestone Snaps on page 19!



Social Justice Matters

Claire Pospischil, of St Pat's Social Justice Group was MC for the Memorial Service and wrote the following report of the event.



An Ecumenical Memorial Service for deceased homeless people.

On Friday 21 June, an inaugural memorial service was held in the forecourt of St Patrick's Cathedral in memory of members of the Parramatta homeless community who had died in the previous year. The event occurred on the winter solstice, the longest night of the year. A similar event has run in the city for the past three years.

Attendees at the ecumenical service included representatives of many groups who minister to Parramatta's homeless community. These included Parramatta Mission, Thread Together, Vinnies, Wesley Mission, the Maronite Ministry Heaven on Earth, Orange Sky, Knights of Malta, Anbaalayam, the Tamil community group, and the Community Migrant Resource Centre.

Fr Robert Riedling, Fr Robert Albayeh, (Maronite community) and Rev. Geoff Smith (Uniting Church, Parramatta Mission) led parts of the service, which was co-ordinated by the Parramatta Diocese, with Faith Housing Australia and Catholic Cemeteries also represented.

Included in the service was a moving memorial segment where attendees could light candles and place them near a cross lying on the cathedral steps as evening fell to symbolise and acknowledge the passing of members of the homeless community.

A homemade (hot) soup station, organised by St Pat's Social Justice Group to support the event, proved to be very popular. Thanks to Dianne Starkey, Marilyn Cook, Marian Polizzi, Jo Edgar, John Starkey, Graham Cook and Aidan Pospischil for your efforts.

It was wonderful to have the opportunity via the memorial service and soup station to encounter members of Parramatta's homeless community and offer hospitality via the homemade soup. Thanks also to cathedral parishioners who attended the event.

On a personal level, after the service I encountered a former work colleague of mine whom I had not seen for 15 years, discovering that he was now a member of Parramatta's homeless community. On one level I — and the parish soup team — were glad to be able to offer him hospitality and conversation at the memorial event. He then left the cathedral precinct with his bag of belongings and went out into the night, leaving me feeling raw and with profound emotions which took some time to process.

This memorial service offered a rare opportunity for both the homeless community and members of key organisations ministering to this need to be present together in an ecumenical manner, covering both physical and spiritual needs. Also, as co-convenor with Fr Robert of St Pat's Social Justice Group, this event has given me the opportunity to reflect at a parish level on ministry to the homeless and our call as baptised Catholics to meet the needs of the poor and disadvantaged.

Fr Robert Riedling reflected on the significance of the event, reminding participants that many of us have privileges we take for granted and urged all to recognize the human dignity in each person.

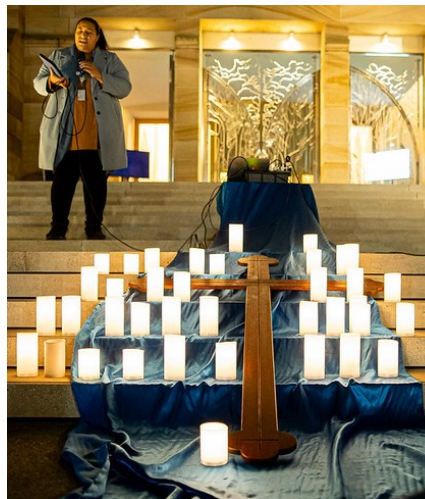


Fr Robert went on to pray:

As we hear stories of people who have been, and are homeless, and as we pray for them, reflect on them and encounter them, we are called by God to do something to alleviate this situation.



In our commemoration of those who have died, we remember them and pray for their families and friends, who, in many cases, perhaps haven't had contact with them for some years.



We also pray for those who maybe died alone, who had no one to care for them in their final days, final hours, final minutes.

As people of faith, we know, Christ is with all people, and we commend them to God.



Shane giving Dianne's chicken and veggie soup the thumbs up

Cont'd next page



Social Justice Group members and friends smiling because their hot home-made soup was a hit with the homeless community.

LAUDATO SI' Matters!



In his article below, **Steven Pospischil** writes



'A key objective of the City of Parramatta Council is to establish a City in Nature for the local area, And, as Catholics, there is much we can do in this space.'

Steven sees Biodiversity as crucial in caring for our Common Home.

So how can we implement Pope Francis' plea to *'listen to the cry of the earth'* in our own backyards... and beyond!

Biodiversity in our own backyards and natural areas

An important part of Pope Francis' call to the people to *"Care for our Common Home"* involves caring for biodiversity. But what is biodiversity? How can we care for the natural environment if we live in suburban backyards which have remarkably changed over the past 230 plus years?

When we look around our city of Parramatta, we find many degraded areas full of weeds and concrete, but if you get out and look a little closer you will also find many natural areas. In some places these natural areas constantly face threats from the pressures of human activity, often bringing weeds and feral animal species. The result is an area that is not biodiverse, and ecological systems start to collapse. This in turn causes species loss, soil degradation, changes to the local climate, flooding impacts, and creates areas that can even be harmful to human health. A key objective of the City of Parramatta council is to establish a City in Nature for the local area, and as Catholics there is much we can do in this space.

So, what is Biodiversity? Biodiversity encompasses all the different types of life forms in a particular area, and these life forms work together in an intricate balance which self supports life. Diversity of species is key here and includes everything from the smallest ants to the tallest trees. Biodiversity supports all of God's gifts in nature that we need to survive, including food, clean water, medicine, and shelter. So, it's pretty important that we get this right!

The City of Parramatta has a volunteer Bushcare program that seeks to reverse some of the damage to the natural areas by way of re-introducing local plant species and removal of weeds. Over time this encourages invertebrates (insects and spiders) to move back in, which in turn helps to pollinate plants and provides food for birds, mammals, and reptiles. Soil structure improves and the areas once again become self-sustaining. We benefit from this healthy environment through cleaner air and water, spaces for passive recreation, and also the joy of seeing God's creations coming back to life in full! You can join a local bushcare group, which usually meets once per month for about two hours.

Another way that we can play our part here is to look at our own backyards and outdoor spaces. If we encourage native species to make a home in our yards by planting local species, we are also creating islands of nature which helps animals to cross from one natural area to another. This is important to enable diversity in biological systems, which improves overall health of those systems. Not only that, but you will also find your own garden will improve in health, which means that gardening will become even easier! So don't be afraid of the insects and other animals that come to your garden. If your local biodiversity is in balance, they will find a natural happy medium. There are so many local native species that work well in the Parramatta area, so you are sure to find some that will suit your garden or patio. Just ask at your local nursery for local native species, or head to one of the nurseries in Sydney that specialises in Australian Natives.

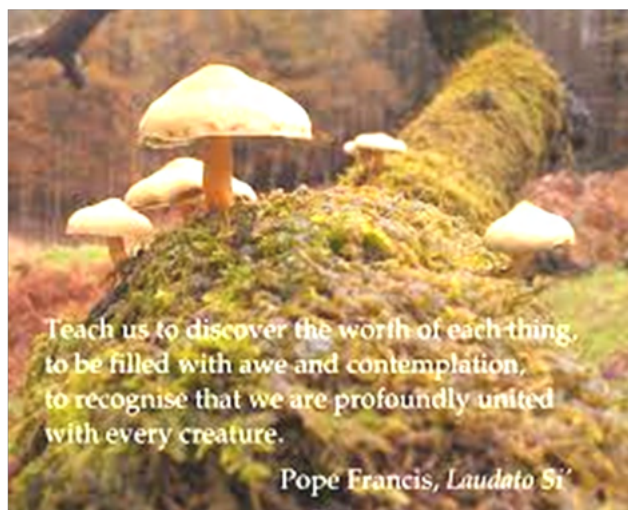
LAUDATO SI' WEEK 2024 took place in May (19th -26th)

but to be GENUINE Caretakers of the Earth, our commitment needs to be ALL YEAR ROUND.

FR ROBERT'S PRAYERS FOR THE HOMELESS cont'd

We pray for those who are homeless now and commit ourselves to doing what we can to alleviate the suffering, to bring some sort of dignity to people who are created in the image and likeness of God, who perhaps society doesn't realise or understand or acknowledge in that way.

We also plead for more funding and a commitment by the government and others who can assist to provide affordable housing and housing for those who are in need to ensure that they have the dignity which they deserve as people made in God's image and likeness.



Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognise that we are profoundly united with every creature.

Pope Francis, Laudato Si'

Faith Formation Matters



PENTECOST RETREAT

*Outpouring
of
The Holy Spirit*



PRESENTERS

FR TOM GREEN
&
ANNETTE HARTMAN

Phillip and Felicia Figueredo, two of the retreatants willingly wrote about their experience.

Phillip wrote

I registered for the Pentecost Retreat longing for refreshment and encouragement. I left the day disquieted and perturbed. Fr Tom Green and Ms Annette Hartman offered us a prayer-filled opportunity to prepare for Pentecost. We came from different parishes in the diocese. The Conference Room was warm in contrast to the cold day outside – 14 degrees.

Fr Tom guided us into the Silence of Mary through prayer and imagery. Praying the Psalms from the Daily Prayer of the Church reminded us of God's presence in our daily experiences. He chose images of Mary from various artists through the centuries. These images invited us into the artist's relationship with Mary and her intimacy with the Father, Mother of Jesus and Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Our responses to the paintings varied, just as Annette reminded us, according to our individual standpoints and experiences of the Trinity. Each of us did take away a new intimacy with the Trinity through the experience of Mary. Annette opened the Scriptures for us and through The Sequence for the Eucharist drew us into the experience of the Holy Spirit – Father of the poor, who warms the chilled and melts the frozen [hearts].

Fr Tom prepared us for silent, prayerful reflection of the Magnificat as entry into Mary's experience and response to the Father's offer to her to bear the Son, Jesus through the Holy Spirit's overshadowing her. One painting opened this mystery for us. Mary sitting erect, her hand raised in welcome, rather than in fear. On her lap was an opened book. The book, likely God's word in the Scriptures was the artist's addition to the image, as Mary, like young girls today in many parts of the world have had no access to formal education and would have been illiterate. Mary's education was through praying the Psalms with her parents, especially each Sabbath. Thus Mary's Magnificat enriched the scriptural song Hannah sung a hundred or more years earlier. Hannah, a barren woman rejoiced in God granting the gift of a son – Samuel. Mary on the other hand, rejoices in being chosen to bear God's son. So the artist introduces the Mystery of Mary giving human flesh to the Word of God encountered in the scriptures.

I was struck by how often 'mercy' occurs in Mary's Magnificat as if this is the intimacy Mary has with God – bearing the Divine

Mercy and in her participation being titled 'Mother of Mercy'. Pope Francis' emphasis on mercy calls us to experience mercy in our lives and share it with our sisters and brothers. He emphasises Fraternity – that we are all children of God, siblings whatever our race, religion, no religion, the list can go on forever. Fr Tom emphasised this in his Vigil Homily, reminding us that the renewed Gift of the Holy Spirit we receive on Pentecost is a gift to give away to all we meet.

So why did I leave such a grace-filled day perturbed and disquieted?

Fr Tom's homily encapsulated my response. On leaving the Cathedral grounds, I saw a group of young adults were setting up a table and chairs in the park. I was interested, but not enough to stay and see what would happen. Yet, as I walked home, the disquiet I mentioned led me to go back. I approached the group, their table covered with food and warm drinks. On the chairs were those seeking warmth, food and human companionship. The leader of the group explained she and her friends came to the park every fortnight to share human companionship, warm drinks and food to unknown people, many who sleep rough. They continued this service long after their religious group stopped. Now these young people offer companionship, contributing the food and drinks from their own resources. Just as the Sequence called them to be – companions to the poor, to warm the chilled and melt my frozen heart.

Thus I was perturbed by my blindness to the presence of people Jesus, Mary, Pope Francis and Fr Tom call me to SEE and to give away what I have taken for granted:— my comfort, affluence and friendship given to me from those who shared in the Retreat, as well as my friends and family.

I hope to go to the park in two weeks.

Phillip readily volunteered to present a summary of his group's discussion to the other retreatants.





Felicia wrote:

For the feast of Pentecost, St Pat's organised a one day-retreat on Saturday, 18th May, with two sessions held that day. The morning session was taken by Fr Tom Green and the afternoon session by Annette Hartman.

We began the morning session with a hymn and the Prayer of the Church. Fr Tom then led us through a few slides and gave us a new perspective on Mary the Mother of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. This helped us to get a deeper understanding of her connection with the Holy Spirit during her life. Her first encounter was at the Annunciation, when the Holy Spirit overshadowed Her and became Her spouse; and She conceived Jesus. Her second encounter was at the Visitation, when Her cousin Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and recognised Her as the Mother of God; and Mary gave us the beautiful Magnificat. Her third encounter was in the Upper Room with the disciples 50 days after Jesus died, and they all received the Holy Spirit as tongues of fire.

The disciples were then able to go out and fearlessly proclaim the Good News.

Fr Tom then talked about the Silence of Mary and how that has been depicted in all artworks about Her.



Silence has probably been a part and parcel of Her being. It is only in the silence of prayer that one can encounter God and follow His will. He also talked about Mary as Type of the Church – by Her belief and obedience, and Her complete trust in God.

We were then asked to go away and reflect on the Magnificat; and then have a group discussion to share our thoughts.

The afternoon session began with a prayer before Annette gave us some great insights on the history of the Feast of Pentecost and how it came into being.

Pentecost is a Greek word that means "fiftieth". In Jerusalem it is also celebrated as the Feast of Weeks, or the first harvest that was taken to the Temple as an offering. It is 50 days from Passover. It is also the birthday of the Church.

John's gospel ends with the Ascension of Jesus and says that Jesus is The Way, The Truth and The Life; and that God would send an Advocate. The Holy Spirit is this Advocate, who will lead us to the complete truth and will continue the teaching message of Jesus. The Holy Spirit makes its presence felt in two signs which were "the sound from heaven like the rush of the mighty wind which filled the house in which they were sitting", and "the tongues of fire that rested on each of them" (Acts of the Apostles 2). When the tongues of fire came down on all the disciples that were gathered in the Upper Room, they all received the gifts of the Holy Spirit, along with the corresponding fruits. They were then able to speak in different tongues and go out into the world and fearlessly preach the Good News. They were thus able to convert many pagans into Christianity.

We ended the session with an evening prayer.



Retreat Facilitators, Michael and Marietta Guillema with presenter Annette Hartman, at the end of the day.

Below Marietta comments on the day's proceedings.

The recent St Patrick's Pentecost retreat, held on Saturday, May 18, 2024, was a resounding success. It drew participants to celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The retreat was a transformative experience, deepening the faith, sparking spiritual renewal in all attendees, and marking the culmination of the Easter season. The theme for this year was "Outpouring of the Holy Spirit", inspired by Acts 4:31 "As they prayed, the house where they were assembled rocked. From this time, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to proclaim the word of God fearlessly."

Key highlights of the retreat included:

- Engaging Speakers: Fr Tom Green delivered a compelling keynote address on the significance of Mary and the Holy Spirit in the modern world. The workshop focused on contemplating Mary's Magnificat.

- Annette Hartman also delivered an outstanding expanded detail and broke open the Liturgical readings.
- Contemplation and reflection: The Retreat allowed the participant to spend quiet time in prayer and reflection at the Chapel.
- Small Group Discussions and Fellowship: Attendees were divided into small groups for discussion, enabling them to share their faith experiences and insights. These fostered a sense of community and mutual support, essential aspects of the Pentecost Retreat.

Feedback from Attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing that the retreat had profoundly impacted their spiritual lives. Participants reported a renewed sense of purpose, greater clarity in their spiritual journey, and a deeper connection to the Holy Spirit.



Seniors matter at St Pat's!

*Enjoying Lunch
in the
Cloister Function Room
Tuesday April 30*



Once again, notices were placed in the bulletin over several weekends encouraging St Pat's seniors to seize 'a wonderful great opportunity to meet fellow parishioners, enjoy good company, and have a great time'.....all for the paltry sum of \$10 per person.

It's believed this was the biggest turnout to date for the Seniors Luncheon, with over 60 people attending.

Phil Slattery was in his element accepting the role as entertainer. To break the ice he started off with some jokes before introducing the challenge of trivial pursuit to test everyone's little grey cells as well as knowledge. There were objections in some quarters saying questions were too hard.

Mili Lee in her role as Cathedral Office Manager spoke briefly about the role of the Parish Pastoral Council touching on the upcoming nominations for formation of the new council. But also expressed how valued our seniors are, in bringing much experience to the table, having contributed years of volunteering to make this parish what it is today.

Lyn Mahoney enlightened the gathering as to how successful the game of Mahjong had become, starting with an idea not so long ago and now a lively group meets every Monday in the small hall. So successful it has been, they were considering including Scrabble. So if Scrabble was more your style, Lyn suggested you enquire at the parish office, or just turn up on Monday afternoon.



After putting his audience at ease with jokes, Phil changed character to become a tough quiz master. But everyone had a good laugh!

Tuesday, 9th July: Mili helps our Seniors get Tech Savvy!



Over 40 parishioners 'of mature years' arrived at the Cloister Function Room to enjoy morning tea and the chance to socialize — but there was a 'catch'!

The Cathedral Parish Manager had warned that there would be an



agenda! And she delivered! Her professional presentation began with a brief overview of cathedral parish history and past operational procedures, and how the technology of the new Cathedral App would enhance community connectedness on many levels. Patiently she walked seniors through downloading the app onto their phones, explaining how it would enable them to access seniors' events and connect with fellow parishioners...and so much more! She praised those senior parishioners for daring to 'seize the day' and embrace the technology that would be beneficial to keeping them in the loop on all matters relevant to life in St Pat's community.

visitation matters

'I was sick and you visited me'

When Richard Van Rys wanted to attend his son's wedding, in northern NSW, he sought pastoral help from the Cathedral Office to care for his mother, Janice (a long-time St Pat's parishioner) during his week's absence. During that time Janice received daily visits from different parishioners, bringing not only sustenance, but much welcomed human contact.

Belinda Bago shares the time she and Dorothy Soh spent chatting and reminiscing with Janice during their visit.



Dorothy, Janice and Belinda

On a beautiful autumn day in April, Dorothy Soh and I paid a visit to Janice Van Rys, a dear friend and a long-time staunch parishioner of St Patrick's Cathedral Parramatta.

Jan greeted us with a smile as we entered her lovely home of over 50 years. She now lives with her son Richard. Jan regrets that these past few years, due to ill health and mobility issues, she has been unable to attend Mass at the Cathedral as often as she would have liked.

Jan told us that when she was 23 years old she injured her right knee, and now it has taken its toll, also putting her back out as she gradually aged. It was during the time when Fr Bob Bossini was Dean at the Cathedral, that Jan's knee and back began to impact on her ability to continue to serve in the Sacristy and she was forced to give it up.

As we sat in her lounge, I was amazed at the beautiful wooden wall panelling which one does not often see these days. Jan explained that her husband, a cabinet-maker by trade, had built all the wooden panels in the lounge room as well as most of the wooden furniture around the house.

Dorothy and I also had the opportunity to reminisce about the times we shared in the choir when Anna Kleibert, was appointed as Music Director of St Patrick's Cathedral Parramatta.

During the aftermath of that awful day, 19th February, 1996, when our beloved St Patrick's Cathedral was burned down, Anna recruited many of the parishioners, including us three, to join the choir to sing for the Inauguration and Dedication of the new St Patrick's Cathedral on November 29th, 2003.

We recalled those days when we had to go to St Pat's in the Field in Fleet Street to attend Mass and choir practice while the Cathedral's restoration was being completed.

When I asked Jan how she came to take on the role of serving in the Sacristy, she said, "Since no one was appointed, and I saw at the time what needed to be done, I just went ahead and did it."

In response to my question if she had received any guidance or training at the time, she explained no one was available to tell her what to do and no one asked her to do it, she just took up the task. I exclaimed that was marvellous of her, seeing something needed to be done, and having the initiative to take on the responsibility.

Jan helped by sewing altar cloths and ironing out the creases before they were put on the altar. Another activity involved cleaning and polishing the silver items.

She appreciated that Fr Kevin Walsh, Dean at the time, — (2000-2004) allowed her to slip into many tasks in the church. She praised him for his work in encouraging and bringing parishioners back to the new St Patrick's, as many had gone to other parishes when the pro-cathedral relocated to the Cumberland site in Fleet Street, during the rebuilding.

When Bernard Kilpatrick was appointed Director of Music for St Patrick's Cathedral, he was given rolls of red fabric to make the choir robes. Jan saw all these rolls of fabric left unused in front of the fireplace in the upstairs Choir Room at Murphy House. So, one day she rolled out the fabric on the floor and started to cut patterns out for the choir members' robes, which she took home and sewed. I told her I still have the one she made for me.

At that point, I praised Jan's attitude and outlook in life: "If there is something to be done, you don't wait to be asked, just do it."

At visit's end, we thanked Jan for her many years of loyal and devoted service to St Patrick's Cathedral, and also for the

opportunity to discover a little more of her story.

Editor's Note:

Thanks to Greg Simpson for supplying the photo of the Choir at the Dedication Mass of the new St Patrick's Cathedral, 29th November, 2003.

Because the photo is small, I have circled Jan, Belinda and Dorothy and Greg.

Some of the choir members are still parishioners to this day, some have moved away, and sadly some are now deceased.





On 26th May, at 9:30am Mass, Fr Tom Green, blessed and commissioned the nine St Pat's Special Religious Educators present to 'spread the Good News' to Catholic children attending State Schools in Parramatta. Parishioners are urged to pray for all our SREs as they undertake this crucial ministry.

Hello to my St Patrick's family.



My name is Juliet D'Mello. I was born in Bombay, (now called Mumbai), India and have recently been accepted to be an SRE for the Cathedral Parish. I migrated to Sydney in 1999, finding it a fantastic place to live. And what an amazing journey this has been for me since then!

I was brought up in a staunch Catholic household. We were a family of five: my Dad and my Mum who sadly passed away in 2001 and my two younger brothers. Since childhood our parents installed in me and my brothers the value of prayer and the beautiful Rosary which was recited together as a family every evening followed by dinner together.

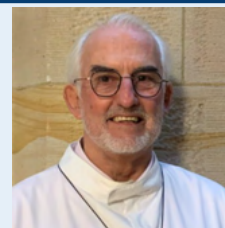
When we were teens my family back home was not financially secure, so I started giving tuition to two beautiful young children to ensure I was able to complete my Bachelor's in Commerce.

These young students I was tutoring have been my inspiration — as well as Pamela Bain & Maria Valentin (although it has taken me a while to realise this) — to become a Special Religious Educator (SRE). Being an SRE has given me an opportunity to provide young students (10 little children in

Getting involved matters

New recruits, Brian Brady and Juliet D' Mello, write about joining the SRE ministry.

After viewing the Sunday weekly bulletin many months ago and noting that there was a need for Special Religious Educators (SREs – or Catechist), I thought about this need and wondered and prayed for guidance. As a soon-to-be-former teacher of primary to community college students of English as an Additional Language (EAL) in three different countries, I believed becoming an SRE would extend my experience and provide students in public schools instruction about the church, and especially about Jesus and God.



As an EAL instructor, I have taught in high schools in Japan and primary schools and community colleges in California, as well as some classes in language schools here in Australia.

With an increasing amount of time on my hands, I was in search of something that would stimulate me while providing a service to children in need of getting to know God a little, or a little better. I then approached Maria Valentin, coordinator of St Pat's SREs, to begin the process of becoming an SRE instructor. The students that I meet with once a week for 30-minute sessions are in a public school in Parramatta. They are in grades 4~6. This presents some challenges with such a diverse-age group of students. However, we seem to be getting along well and I am amazed at times with some of the thought-provoking questions that they pose during the lessons.

Extending myself to become involved in SRE instruction has not been an easy decision. If someone is in a similar position, I would advise them to pray to God for guidance, and then make some enquiries.

As I undertake my role as an Acolyte assisting the Priests (and Bishop Vincent) at both early morning and Sunday Masses here at St Patrick's Cathedral, it makes me aware that there are some people, children especially, who either do not know or are not very familiar with God. In a small and simple way, I wish to use the talent, given to me by God, to help remedy this situation.

My talent is not unique. We all have God-given talents. How we choose to use our talent is up to us.

Kindergarten at Bayanami Public School) with a unique educational and faith experience that will hopefully help them to grow into young people of faith, hope, purpose and lead them to our Lord Jesus Christ. What an incredible bunch of little ones they are - amazing bundles of joy and wanting to know every little thing about our Lord. They are the source of inspiration in my incredible journey in the SRE ministry, one I hope to continue to be involved in for many more years to come.

I encourage St Pat's parishioners to consider joining this wonderful ministry, so important in teaching our Catholic children in State Schools, young and old, about the richness of the Catholic faith, guiding them and helping them to grow in their understanding of Catholic beliefs, practices and values.

It matters to recognise good SRE Leaders

FAREWELL PAMELA,



For more than 8 of her 25 years as a Catechist for St Patrick's, **Pamela Bain** was the Parish's SRE Coordinator, a role that became more demanding over that time, but one that she nevertheless executed with diligence and dedication.

Last year she relinquished the role, receiving well-deserved accolades and fond farewells, from fellow catechists at the group's Christmas Luncheon.

WELCOME MARIA



So this year, while Pamela's devotion to teaching Scripture remains undiminished, the baton of leadership as the new Parish Coordinator (PC) has been taken up by **Maria Valentin**, who has loved being a Catechist for almost 10 years.

Having experienced 'being thrown in at the deep end' when first taking on the role of PC, Pamela has been prepared to mentor Maria, offering guidance, if needed or sought. However, from the outset, the former PC is confident that with Maria's 'Yes' to accepting the leadership role, that the right person, so committed to the SRE ministry, has been chosen.

As Parish Coordinator, Maria reports this GOOD NEWS

We've been so blessed to have a significant number of newcomers joining the team of St Patrick's SREs during the first half of 2024.

We couldn't be happier to welcome these seven new recruits:

**Cindy El-Sabbagh, Juliet D'Mello, Therese Jilwan, Gaulbert Pais
Miguela Macatangay, Domenica Nancy Joseph and Brian Brady**

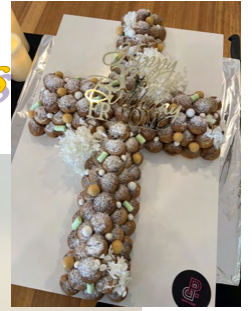
With deep gratitude we thank them for their generosity in joining this vitally important ministry.

The parish now has a vibrant group of 27 Catechists willingly volunteering precious time, unfailing faith and tireless effort to minister to our children and young adults in the state schools. Every week our dedicated SREs go out to teach the good News at five public schools and one high school surrounding St Pat's Parish.

**Could YOU be the next person
that God has chosen to join us?**

For more details, drop us an email at
sre@stpatscathedral.com.au.

Birthday Matters



STOP PRESS!

This space was still blank just days before this issue was heading off for printing! Obviously it was meant to be!

It afforded the opportunity to wish Fr Tom Green **Happy 30th Birthday!**

The celebration was a parish affair, with more than 120 people gathering in the Cloister Function Room after 11am Mass on 21st July.

The buffet table was laden with an array of tempting fare twice around, first with mains courses then with luscious, tempting desserts.

Who was responsible? The generous community-minded St Pat's people of course, keen to show affection and support for their young, newly-ordained shepherd.

Accolades, too, for the many people who pitched in, assisting in setting up, preparing the buffet, serving, clearing away dirty items, washing up and finally folding up tables, stacking chairs and sweeping!

Credit to Parish Secretary, Pat Preca, 'boss of the day' for her excellent supervising. And special thanks to Minnie Harb who provided the cake, so aptly cross-shaped.

One regret: there is no photographic record to capture this wonderful example of St Pat's community-minded spirit in action.



History Matters

Here, Judith Dunn OBE, goes beyond parish boundaries to relate the incredible history of St Vincent's Boys Home. Read, and be enlightened, and amazed!

PARRAMATTA INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR BOYS – St VINCENTS BOYS HOME

In 1891 the St Vincent de Paul Society took the decision to, “establish an Industrial School for Catholic boys of the neglected classes” to mark the first 10 years of operation of their work in Sydney. The instigators of the school were **Patrick Minahan**, bootmaker, Labor Party member for State Parliament, co Proprietor of Labor Daily, founder member of the Catholic Club and founder chairman of Knights of the Southern Cross, **John Keeshan**, married to Patrick's cousin Sarah and her brother **Tom O'Mara** who was a grocer.

Patrick asked Sarah to take in a street child which she did, but could not cope financially by the time she took in three children. The St Vincent de Paul Society took on the responsibility for them and rented a house in Surry Hills. The work that was to become St Vincent's Boys Home had begun, although at this time it was named St Aloysius as they moved in on that saint's feast day. The first house being unsuitable, they moved to another site in Surry Hills. It was furnished by donation including Mark Foy's agreeing to supply goods at cost. Mr Chadwick, retired schoolteacher, was employed to run the home, teach the children and do the housework with the proviso that washing could be sent out. Within 4 months the number of boys had swelled to 10 and constant fundraising had begun. In 1892 they moved to Fivedock, to a house with two acres of land to grow their own vegetables. With St Joseph's and St Ignatius' Schools closer, they hoped to make use of St Joseph's house cow and left over clothing from St Ignatius' boarders. The Parramatta Steamship Company delivered all parcels to the wharf free of charge.

A wooden dormitory for 35 was erected and a routine established. Rise at 6.30am, breakfast at 7.30am, schoolwork comprised the main part of the day until 4pm, with the evening meal at 5.30am and lights out at 8pm. Boys' ages ranged from 3 to 13 years and numbers climbed to 51 in 1894.

The work was expanding and St Vincent de Paul could not cope so asked the Marist Brothers to become involved. The name was changed from St Aloysius to St Vincent's Boys Home and they began to look for new land. After much searching, 21 acres of land with a two-storey house and basement was found near Westmead Station with many farm buildings. Brothers Francis, Berchmans and Xavier moved in and they built a two-storey wooden dormitory. On 30 August 1896, the boys walked from Fivedock to their new home at Westmead. Older boys washed and dressed younger ones with the smaller children sleeping two to a bed. Within 6 months the brothers published the first edition of *Our Boys*, the yearly report of the home.

Clearing land for growing vegetables, sinking wells (they were not connected to the water supply until 1901) and general farming took precedence over school work at first. A horse, raffled to raise funds, was returned to the home by the winner under some gentle pressure. In 1901 an adjoining 50 acres of

land was acquired and the rapid foray into farming was nothing short of staggering. By 1902 the farm provided all butter, milk and vegetables for the home with surplus being sold at market.

The first trade to be set up was tailoring with a plea for used clothing with the note, “*the clothing need not fit exactly as it is amazing what the brothers and their scissors could do*” The trades that outlasted all others were printing and bookbinding, set up in 1897. All boots were made by the boys in the boot workshop which also had a commercial section. Home Brand millet brooms were made with millet from the Hunter Valley. Other trades carried out by the boys included tennis net making, tin smithing, blacksmithing, carpentry, hammock, straw hat and mattress making and saddle and bridle making. Due to the trades, the entrance age was raised to 10 years. Younger boys lived at St Michael's Orphanage, Baulkham Hills. Boys who reached the school leaving age of 14 were not forced to leave. In 1907, of 72 boys, 13 were full time workers.

Spare time was spent playing cricket after the Brothers and boys cleared one hundred and five tree stumps and the grounds were levelled when the Brothers inveigled the Army into having their bulldozer drivers practice on the land! The major sport was rugby league but swimming in Redbank Creek and picnics at Granville and Dorothy Mount were also popular as was pigeon keeping. Boys also loved going to Arnotts Biscuits in a horse and dray to pick up a sack of broken biscuits. One of the Brothers bought a small cement mixer to make a constant supply of cakes. Two major activities were the formation of a Cadet Corp and the band, the latter of which was the most successful money maker for the home and gave many old boys a successful way of earning a living.

The first public outing of the band was to lead the Society in the 1915 Australia Day Parade dressed in smart uniforms. In 1916, the famous Cooe March from Gilgandra was welcomed to Parramatta Park by the band. From the 1920s the band was a major fundraiser, boys playing for church and civil ceremonies with lessor payments for church functions. There was a regular booking to play at the wharf for shipping departures and they undertook country tours. A truck was purchased to take boys and instruments to bookings. They won the Sydney A Grade Marching Contest, the A and B Grade Championship of NSW, the Boosey and Hawkes A Grade Shield and also performed as a reed or jazz band.



The band sets out for an engagement. 1926

The children's lives improved when gas was connected to the showers and the Ladies Committee bought a second-hand washing machine, although with over 200 boys there were still only 4 teaching brothers! The war and depression caused applications to enter to rise and sale of goods to fall. From 1898 the fostering out system was preferred by the Government, but the Brothers worked to a higher authority – the Bishop! [to page 21](#)

History Matters

continued from previous page

Without warning a train line was run through the farm cutting the house off from the majority of their land. In the 1970s boys were accepted from the courts and in 1982 the last trade shop closed. Land was sold off to Catherine Macauley School and the band instruments given to Parramatta Marist School. Four separate houses were set up and boys lived a more normal family-like life, each house in the charge of a Brother. In December 1985 an auction sold off the contents and the building was put to other business uses.

The history of St Vincent's Boys' Home does not have an ending but is the story of adaptation to the changing needs of working with disadvantaged children. There is so much more to this story, only brief glimpses visible here. My husband, Greg and I fostered three boys from St Vincent's and had a long and happy relationship with the Brothers and their charges – but that is another story.



A Heritage Matters Snippet!

Judith Dunn

reveals: **Why she thanked BUNNINGS**

On May 25, a large group of year 11 students from two Catholic high schools came to Parramatta for a year 11 pilgrimage entitled, *Finding God in the Past, Present and Future*. This included sectarianism in the early colony and I was asked to guide the students and make notes for the educators. Included in the program was a visit to St Patrick's Cemetery. Arriving early I put everything in St Francis' Chapel and locked it in while I checked the memorials I wished to talk about. First aid kit, notes, books, purse and car keys were all locked inside the chapel.

On returning to the chapel I found I was locked out – the key to the chapel jammed and would not open the door! Fortunately, I had my phone in my pocket so rang my husband to come – and bring his bolt cutters!

With the lock removed and the day with the students over, we went to Bunnings to buy a new lock. I was aghast at the price of a strong, anti-corrosion lock. Seventy-nine dollars! *The Friends of St Patrick's Cemetery* has a very small bank account, so my husband and I went home and composed a letter to Bunnings asking if they could

donate the lock and drove back to their store.

To our delight, Bunnings, at Westmead, readily agreed to supply the strong lock we needed, free of charge, so we could make the chapel secure once more.

We would like to thank *Bunnings* for their kindness in supporting our *Friends* group and all those who care for our Christian heritage.



Judith shows the new 'gift' lock from Bunnings in place.

Acknowledging God Matters

The Lord's Prayer is not allowed in most Canadian and US Public schools any more. But a 15 year-old school kid in Winnipeg, Manitoba, wrote the following NEW School Prayer:

He got an A+ for this entry (totally awesome!) His version of The Lord's Prayer (very different...and true!)

Now I sit me down in school
Where praying is against the rule.

For this great nation under God
Finds mention of Him very odd.

If scripture now the class recites,
It violates the Bill of Rights.

And anytime my head I bow
Becomes a Federal matter now.

Our hair can be purple, orange or green,
That's no offense; it's a freedom scene.

The law is specific, the law is precise.
Prayers spoken aloud are a serious vice.

For praying in a public hall
Might offend someone with no faith at all.

In silence alone we must meditate,
God's name is prohibited by the Province.

We're allowed to cuss and dress like freaks,
And pierce our noses, tongues and cheeks.

They've outlawed guns, but FIRST the Bible.
To quote the Good Book makes me liable.

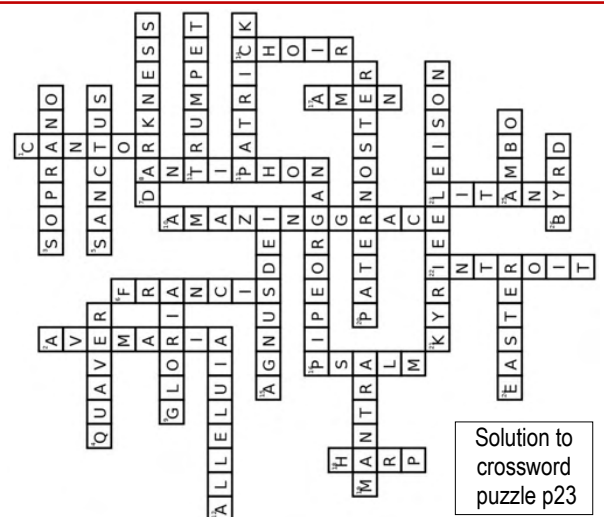
We can elect a pregnant Senior Queen,
And the 'unwed daddy,' our Senior King.

It's 'inappropriate' to teach right from wrong,
We're taught that such 'judgments' do not belong.

We can get our condoms and birth controls,
Study witchcraft, vampires and totem poles.

But the Ten Commandments are not allowed,
No word of God must reach this crowd.

Submitted by Felicia Figueredo



Solution to crossword puzzle p23



Silvana Rechichi, member of *Friends of St Patrick's Cemetery*, writes about the connection between *The Goldrush and the Swiss Migration to Australia and the Scheggia Family*, who settled in Parramatta.

"During Victoria's goldrush many Italian speakers sought their fortune on the Jim Crow Goldfields (Now Daylesford and Hepburn Springs). This book looks at the achievements of those settlers and their descendants including food (bullboar), wine, mineral water,

architecture, sport, art and so much more. Numerous names, including Crippa, Del Zoppo, Gervasoni, Guscetti, Lucini, Morganti, Pedrazzini, Pedretti, Pozzi, Rebecchi, Righetti, Rodoni, Rolleri, Sartori, Scheggia, Tinetti, Vanzetta.", quoted from **Clare Gervasoni's** book, *Bullboar, Macaroni and Mineral Water: SPA Country's Swiss-Italian Story*, led to Silvana's focus on the Scheggias.

History & Heritage Matters

The **Scheggia** family name appears on the headstone of a burial plot in St Patrick's Cemetery Parramatta. It belongs to **Giuseppe (Joseph) Scheggia** (c 1829), born in Canton Ticino, the Italian speaking area of Switzerland, to **Giuseppe Scheggia** and **Maria Gallenzia**.

I do not know for certain what year Giuseppe made the journey to Australia but, it is safe to say, that he may have been part of a 2000 strong cohort of Italian speaking Swiss nationals who came to Australia during the goldrush days; most of them were farmers, sharecroppers and vine growers, as well as a good number of skilled trades people, like tailors, builders and masons among others. As the goldrush came to an end most of them, regardless of fortune, chose to return to their native Switzerland, but a good number stayed and settled here, mainly in the Daylesford and Hepburn Springs area in Victoria.

The first time **Joseph Scheggia's** name is connected with **Parramatta** is in 1865; he was the victim of a pickpocket attack as he lay asleep on the roadside. This incident was reported in the Sydney Mail on 11 November 1865. He was making his way home and felt tired, (dare I say he might have been a bit tipsy?), so he lay down on the roadside and fell asleep. Two pickpockets relieved him of a "meerschaum pipe (2) and case, a watch and some silver coins.

On the 23rd of April, 1867 Joseph, aged 36, married **Margaret McNamara**, aged 24, the daughter of **Michael McNamara & Mary Sullivan**; all born in Limerick, Ireland, who migrated to Australia when Margaret was a young child. Joseph & Margaret were married in St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. From the announcement in the newspaper, we know that she was the McNamaras' third daughter. The marriage certificate reveals that Joseph was a tailor by trade; what work Margaret did is not mentioned but in

her obituary in 1897 she was described as a "hard worker" all her life. They settled in premises on **Church St, Parramatta** where Joseph plied his trade as a tailor and where they raised their family.

They had three children: **Mary** (1868-1869); **Joseph Cornelius** (1869-1901); **Annie Helena** (1871-1936). Mary died at 17 months of age; Joseph Cornelius joined the NSW Artillery as a gunner but, according to the NSW Police Gazette of 14 November, 1894, he was named as a deserter from the service. He was 23 years at the time. Between joining the artillery service, his desertion and his death in 1901, Joseph Cornelius married three times; one marriage produced no children; the other two, one child each, **Joseph Henry Scheggia** (1895) and **Edith Margaret Scheggia** (1898). Joseph Cornelius died in Sydney and is buried in Waverly Cemetery.

Annie Helena married **Alfred John Sevicke Jones**, a New Zealander from the city of Canterbury, in St Patrick's church in Parramatta on 28th June, 1898. (Annie died in New Zealand in 1936). Annie & Alfred had one son and one daughter: **Langtry Cecil Jones** born in 1902, the name of the girl is unknown.

Joseph Scheggia seems to have integrated well into his new Australian home in Parramatta. This is known because he became an active member of **The Ancient Order of Foresters - Court Pride of Australia No 2488 Parramatta Branch (3)**, a benevolent society whose aim was to give aid to any members who fell on hard times. The society is now known as the Foresters Friendly Society, and in 1999 it was incorporated as a Public Company.

When Joseph died in 1876 the society leadership put a notice in the paper encouraging members to "ATTEND" his funeral. It is also known that he acquired a nickname and was referred to as "**Bandy Jo**" the tailor. This was gleaned from an

article in the *Cumberland Argus and Fruit Growers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW)*, from 1925, which reminisced about the businesses that were present in Parramatta 50 years earlier. During his lifetime at Parramatta, Joseph, appeared frequently in the Insolvency Court, both as a creditor and as debtor!

A few years after Joseph's death, Margaret became a foster mother to a young girl by the name of **Maud Byron** (1880); Margaret died on 6th April, 1897, after a long and painful agony, suffering from rheumatism and gangrene. Maud was 17 at the time. I do not know what became of her, or whether or not there are any descendants left from the Scheggias of Parramatta.

Joseph, Margaret, and their infant daughter Mary were buried in St Patrick's Cemetery, at Parramatta.

Notes:

1. A *meerschaum pipe* is made from mineral sepiolite.
2. <https://heritagecentre.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/persons/3153/ancient-order-of-foresters>.



The Scheggia Tombstone



St Patrick's Cemetery matters

Progress Report, July 2024

by Bob Edgar, President



On the 14th of May members of the **Friends of St Patrick's Cemetery** were able to secure a meeting with the Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Pierre Esber and the Group Manager of Parks and Open Spaces, Terry Johnson at which our Vice President, Judith Dunn, Phil Russo and Chris Worthington were able to put forward our case for the preservation of Australia's oldest Catholic cemetery. It was a very encouraging meeting and gave us optimism for Council's future management.

Now, office meetings are all very well but there is nothing like a first-hand close inspection of the subject in question. Therefore, we were especially pleased to be able to organise an onsite meeting with the Lord Mayor, Terry Johnson and several other senior council staff. This meeting took place on the afternoon of 18th May. In attendance from our group were myself, Phil Russo and Greg Simpson.

Greg, with his engineering background, was able to articulate the need for a survey of the site which would inform the need for, and implementation of, better drainage. Very importantly, this would prevent flooding of, and consequent damage to, the historic mortuary chapel. Phil, having been Deputy Lord Mayor in the past, knows the ins and outs of Council procedures and was able to relate to the Lord Mayor and staff.

In summary, our demands of Council are as follows;

1. Site drainage: a drainage system should be installed to control stormwater run-off. To enable the design of such a system a site survey is required. A brief was given to the relevant Council officer.
2. Removal of Camphor Laurel: the removal may cause further problems with decaying roots causing subsidence and further damage to neighbouring graves. However, if it stays, the existing damage will worsen. It will be assessed.
3. Site security: we are concerned that the gates are not locked at night.
4. Relocation of headstones adjacent to chapel: headstones that have been relocated, some decades ago, to the southern side of the chapel are preventing water runoff and the constant damp is causing damage to the chapel. Council agrees that they should be removed and the ground level altered.
5. Change grade of gravel area north and west of the chapel: Council should alter the gradient of the path leading to Church Street from the chapel and remove timber edging that causes ponding of water next to and inside the chapel. Council agrees that this can be done.

Since that meeting, we have noted that Council has erected a proper safety fence around the sunken Downey Family vault and has agreed to proceed with repairs. We look forward to further progress in the preservation of this precious icon of the earliest colonial history of our Catholic forebears.

We would welcome new people to join the *Friends of St Patrick's Cemetery Parramatta*.

Meetings are at 7:00pm on the third Tuesday of the month in the Cloister Hall.



↑ The Family Downey Vault



Drainage & Water Run-off issues



It matters to record Sacramental Milestones



This year the children making their First Holy Communion met over 2 Sundays to receive the Sacrament. After Mass each group had a photo on the Cathedral steps before gathering in the hall to receive their certificates and gifts. Then of course each group were delighted to have a celebratory cake to round off a special joyful day to remember always!



A Spiritual Awakening: *men answering the call.*

*by Antonio Serbati,
who began the Parramatta Men's Rosary.*

Our Lady promised that those who fulfil the First Saturday Devotion faithfully will have her assistance at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation and that by establishing devotion to her Immaculate Heart the salvation of souls and peace would prevail. The requirements of this devotion in order to fulfil it faithfully and to receive its full graces are:

- ◆ Attend Sacramental Confession once a month;
- ◆ Receive Holy Communion on five consecutive First Saturdays;
- ◆ Offer Reparations for the sins Committed against the Immaculate Heart.;
- ◆ Recite the Rosary while meditating on the mysteries for at least 15 minutes.

Are you a man or know a man, seeking a spiritual revival, seeking fraternity, seeking a chance to serve, seeking a mission but most importantly who wants to be a Saint? We invite and urge you to join us and pray! As Padre Pio concisely declared: *"Some people are so foolish that they think they can go through life without the help of the Blessed Mother. Love the Madonna and pray the rosary, for her Rosary is the weapon against the evils of the world today. All graces given by God pass through the Blessed Mother."*

The truest embodiment of masculinity can only be found in a striving for holiness, virtue, and a relationship with Christ in union with other faithful men. *"Iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."* Proverbs 27:17 (Douay-Rheims). Who better to guide us than Mary, our Mother, who through her Immaculate Heart seeks to bring us into the Sacred Heart of Jesus, so we can intimately know him, and the love he has for us?

Yours in Christ,
Antonio Serbati

The Spirit is always at work. It is funny how a conversation between elated men at the Parramatta Dioceses Synod in October 2023 sparked the beginning of a small prayerful movement steeped in the masculine need for fraternity, mission, service, and worship.

Since November 2023, in honour of Our Lady of Fatima and her requests, a small group of men across the Diocese of Parramatta, in union with our brothers from the Archdiocese of Sydney, as well as other men across the Nation and the World, have been meeting on the first Saturday of each month to offer our Prayers and Reparations to our Lord for the Blasphemies committed against his beloved Mother and her Immaculate Heart.

The five blasphemies against the Immaculate Heart of Mary for which reparation is made are:

1. Offenses against the Immaculate Conception.
2. Offenses against her Perpetual Virginity.
3. Offenses against her Divine Maternity.
4. Offenses by those who try publicly to implant in children's hearts indifference, contempt and even hatred toward her.
5. Insults directed against her sacred images.

The love for our Holy Mother and the most Holy Rosary have forged a fraternity of men who, in love, offer their prayers publicly, petition the Lord for his gracious mercy, and defend the honour of their spiritual mother whilst being led by her ever so gently and affectionately closer in relationship to her Son and his body, the Church.

PARRAMATTA MEN'S ROSARY 2024 Witness and pray with us. **WHEN:** the first Saturday of the month. **TIME:** 10:30am
WHERE: Prince Alfred Square, Parramatta. (opposite the Cathedral on Marist Place)

Knowledge of the Rosary matters: *DID YOU KNOW?*

On May 13, 1917, Mary appeared to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal. She told them to come back to that exact place on the 13th day of each month for the next six months, promising to appear to them each time and entrust a message to them.

Mary told the children to pray for world peace by reciting the Rosary every day. On July 13, 1917, Mary asked the children to add a short prayer to the end of each decade of the Rosary:

***O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell;
lead all souls to heaven, especially those in most need of thy mercy.***

Today this is referred to as the Fatima Prayer. Many Catholics incorporate it into the Rosary as Mary requested.



CREDO

MATTERS

Social Gathering for Young Adults



Susanna Lotoaniu puts us in the picture

On 16th June there was a credo social event for young adults aged 18 to 35, where several close brothers and sisters attended.

The people who came to the gathering demonstrated what diverse cultures we have in St Pat's parish community. The night was filled with familiar faces, but it was wonderful to see new faces as well, enjoying the chance to interact and share fellowship with each other.

A young couple shared their love with us by introducing their first child. Some attended alone, seeking community. Some attended simply because of their love for the church, while others who hadn't previously attended parish events also joined us. Everyone gathered together for one purpose: to show their shared love for Christ.

Massive shoutout to our Chaplain, Fr Tom Green, our food suppliers, those providing the good vibes, but especially to everyone who chose to attend the night.

Let this occasion be just the beginning of bringing the same vibes to the next gathering!
God willing!

May the Lord's peace be with you all.

EDITOR also putting you in the picture.

Some of the young adults pictured are already involved in a parish ministry, or two, ranging from acolyte, altar server, reader, chorister, — that I am aware of — with Ola, one young woman, new to the parish informing Susanna in the course of the evening that she is keen to join the hospitality group.

Readers, depending on which Mass you attend, you might recognize some of the young adults who were at this Credo Social Gathering.

Congratulations to **Susanna**, as well as **Anne Stanton**, (the Mum pictured with baby Faustina), who were recently chosen to be on the new Pastoral Parish Council. Anne and her husband George bookend the group in the photo. George is an Acolyte often serving at 11am Mass, while Anne is a Reader.

Dispensing hospitality matters



The Cloister Café is abuzz most Sunday mornings, thanks to committed volunteers turning up to serve morning tea to parishioners and visitors after 9:30 and 11am Masses. Above, at left, is newcomer Vaine Snr persuaded by her sister, Sesilia Lotoaniu to join the 9:30am Hospitality Team. With them are Nestor and Danilita Montesco, who have notched up about 14 years' service! It could be longer!
 ↓ Sesilia's powers of persuasion saw other Loto'aniu and Tanner family members also inducted into service in the café, after 9:30am Mass.



↓ Andy & Carmen Cutajar, who have served morning tea for about 20 years, were good role models for new recruits, Tarun Joseph and Samantha Percy. As was Kabita Rosario's volunteering a good example for daughter Mary Treesa on her maiden duty after 11am Mass.



We reserve the right to edit, omit or censor any article submitted for publication

Mourning matters



Dear Shepherd,
 rest in
 God's Peace

VALE

Most Rev Kevin Manning DD, Bishop Emeritus
 As this issue was about to go to print, the sad news spread around the Diocese that Bishop Kevin, aged 90, had died peacefully on Monday morning 15 July 2024, in Bathurst.

Bishop Kevin served as the second bishop of Parramatta from 1997–2010. Installed the year after the disastrous fire in February 1996, the mammoth task of raising a new St Patrick's Cathedral from the ashes fell on his shoulders.

During his 12 years' tenure, Bishop Kevin endeared himself to the parishioners here in the Cathedral Parish. They loved having their parish priest living on site! Many remember how he used to drive to *St Pat's in the Field* (during the Cathedral's rebuilding) to say morning Mass on weekdays!

When he retired in March 2010, parishioners were truly devastated. He had the gift of connecting socially with his flock and often came to Sunday morning tea.

So many memories....maybe a tribute in the next St Pat's Matters would be appropriate.

St Pat's parishioners, who were privileged to experience his pastoral leadership, would concur with the sentiment expressed in the farewell tribute in Sunday's Bulletin on 21st July:

Bishop Manning was the epitome of a Good Shepherd. He was a dutiful and humble servant full of compassion, humour and a love for the Church. Our Diocese owes much to his leadership and vision, and we pray for the repose of his soul and give thanks to God for his earthly life



Editor's note:
 These two photos were taken at the Bishop's farewell in 2010.

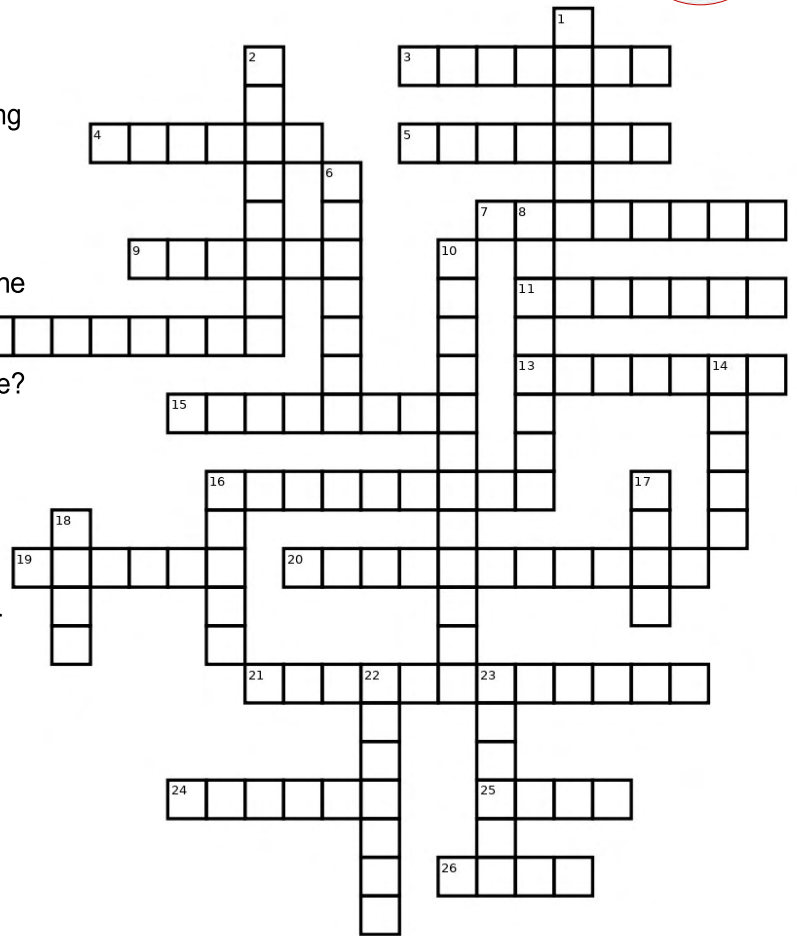
The people are still parishioners here and the children are now all grown up!





ACROSS

3. A high pitched woman's voice.
4. A note with half duration of a crotchet
5. The Song of the Angels and Archangels heard during the Eucharistic Prayer
7. The opening words of 'Christ be Our Light' *Longing for light we wait in _____*
9. The Song of the Angels at Christmas
11. The "instrument of salvation" which will sound on the last day
12. A processional song to acclaim the gospel
13. Which saint is attributed with writing the "breastplate"?
15. The Song which accompanies the Fraction Rite before Holy Communion. (2 words: 5,3)
16. Our cathedral instrument built in 1898 (two words)
19. A repetitive chant used for meditation.
20. "Our Father" in Latin.
21. Lord have mercy in Greek (2 words: 5,6)
24. In which liturgical season do we hear "I saw water flowing from the temple"?
25. The structure from which the Liturgy of the Word is proclaimed.
26. Famous 16th century English Catholic



DOWN

1. A singer who leads the assembly music
2. A favourite Latin song sung at Weddings (2 words: 3,5)
6. A widely sung Australian Mass setting by Paul Taylor, Mass of Saint _____
8. A short musical text often alternating with psalm verses
10. A hymn about someone blind who can now see. (2 words: 7,5)
14. A group of singers in church
16. A biblical song written by King David
17. Hebrew word regularly used in liturgy, meaning "So be it" or "It is true".
18. A plucked instrument often mentioned in the Scriptures
22. A chant sung during the Entrance Procession
23. A long chant invoking the Saints, heard at the Easter Vigil and Ordinations.

Crossword Solution on page 17



It was in the latter part of last year that long time parishioner, Lyn Mahoney first mooted the idea of initiating a Mahjong-playing group. The seed sown, Dorothy Soh took on the role of advertising in the Bulletin to gauge people's interest in learning how to play this ancient game, developed in Southern China in the mid-1800s toward the end of the Qing Dynasty.

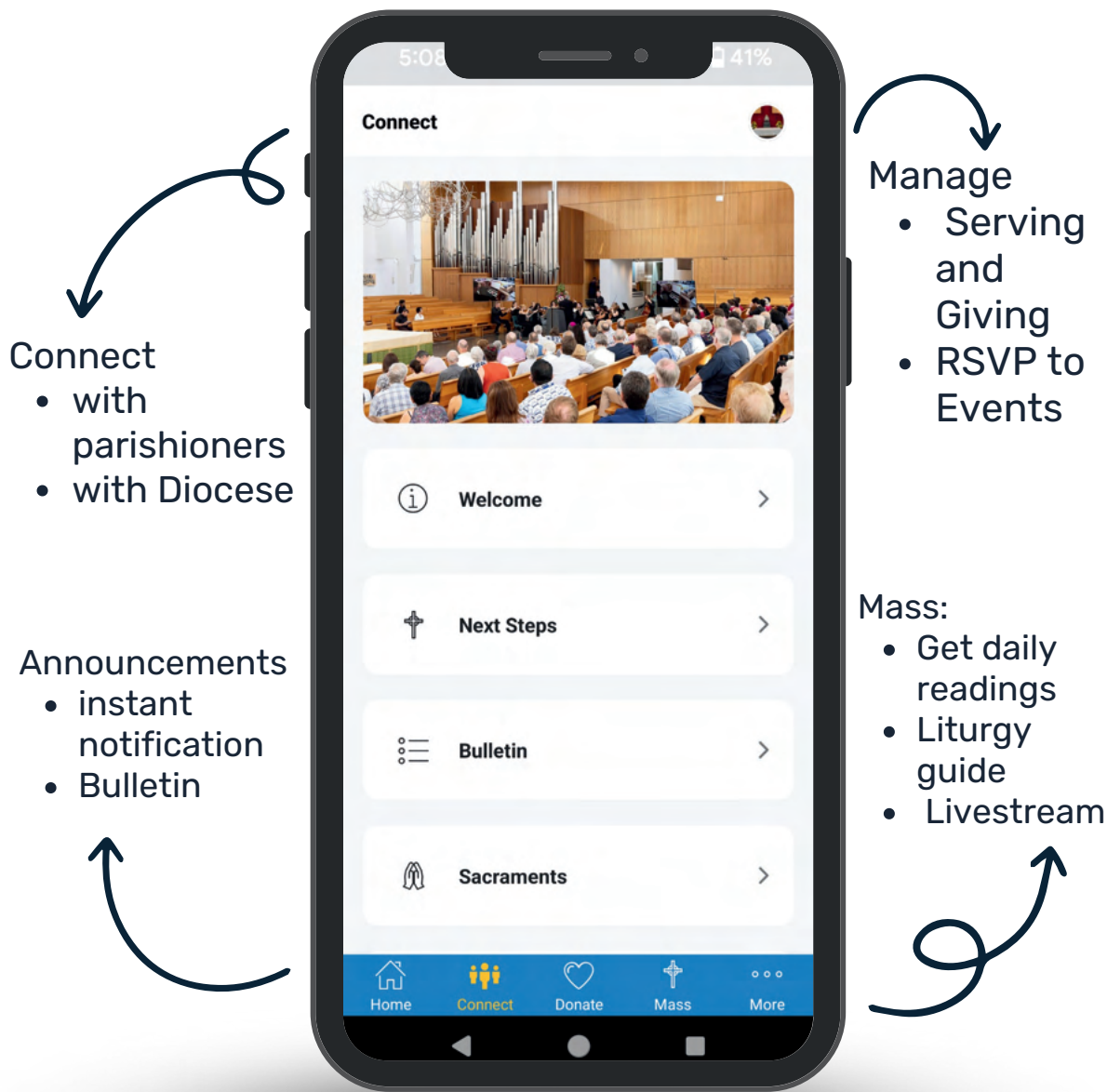
The group started earlier this year. Luckily some members were able to assist newcomers to gain skill in learning this challenging and complicated game. (4 players per game). Increased interest has meant that a second Mahjong Set has had to be purchased. Interested and/or merely Intrigued? You are welcome to come and check out what's involved.

The group meets on Monday afternoons in the small hall at 1.30pm.

A little bit of trivia:

The word "mahjong" means "sparrow" in southern Chinese dialects, referring to the bird-like clacking sound the tiles make during reshuffling





Connect

- with parishioners
- with Diocese

Announcements

- instant notification
- Bulletin

Manage

- Serving and Giving
- RSVP to Events

Mass:

- Get daily readings
- Liturgy guide
- Livestream

NEW PARISH APP

ST PAT'S CATHEDRAL PARRAMATTA

1. DOWNLOAD THE APP:

- Scan QR Code below to go to Google Play Store or Apple App Store on your mobile device.
- Tap the "Install" button to download and install the app.



2. SET UP PROFILE

- Once installed, open the app and finish setting up your profile.

*Connect, Engage
and Serve with*
**ST PAT'S
CATHEDRAL APP**