

ST PAT'S MATTERS

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



*May we be bearers of hope,
reflecting Christ's light
in our troubled world.*

DECEMBER 2024 | ISSUE 121

EDITORIAL

I'm very sad to announce that this edition of *St Pat's Matters* is my 'swan song'.

Since its inception in 1996, I have had the privilege of gathering content, (often 'pestering' people), organizing the publication's layout and printing the publication in the parish office (in black and white) on the Gestetner, before moving to printing at home, thanks to my husband Baldo purchasing a second hand printing machine!

Then in 2010 printing returned to the parish office with the publication bursting into 'glorious' colour. (Mili Lee being the galvanizer!)

My sincere thanks to all the parish priests who have trusted me over the years in undertaking this role; from Fr John Boyle, who said 'yes' to my idea to produce a magazine, and as well to his successors — Frs Kevin Walsh, Wim Hoekstra, John McSweeney, Bob Bossini and now Fr Robert Riedling. And to Mili, Pat and Donna for your unwavering and invaluable support.

The role has been a labour of love, despite the unexpected glitches that often caused chaos. A blessing too, in getting to know so many people through their contributions and stories; and delving into St Patrick's history, to discover the legacy of past priests and parishioners.

I am 'chuffed' to be invited to keep my hand in, by doing the editorial. With the new year, *St Pat's Matters* enters a new phase. May the new chapter transition smoothly so the magazine can continue to document the history, events and life in and beyond our Cathedral Parish.

I leave readers to turn the pages to discover this issue's contents.

In parting, I've taken the liberty of quoting Bishop Kevin Manning's final words in his 2010 address, (p21) *'...although all farewells are tinged with sadness, we must see these changes as part of the bigger picture, as part of God's plan for the Church of Parramatta. We are all privileged to serve God's people, his Church, even if only for a season.'*

M. Polizzi

ADVENT & JUBILEE 2025

A Time of Hope...and Renewal



The first Sunday of Advent, not only marked the Church's new Liturgical Year, but also heralded the beginning of the 2025 Jubilee Year proclaimed by Pope Francis. Themed "Pilgrims of Hope," this extraordinary year, invites the entire Church into a sacred time of grace, renewal, and deepened faith.

Advent too, is for us, a season of hope—a time when we await the coming of Christ with expectant hearts. The first candle lit on the Advent wreath, the CANDLE of HOPE, reminds us that God's promises are steadfast, His mercy boundless, and His presence ever faithful. The Pope's vision for the Jubilee Year resonates beautifully with this Advent HOPE, calling us to be "Pilgrims of Hope" in a world in desperate need of healing, reconciliation, and joy.

Pope Francis invites us to approach this Jubilee Year with hearts open to God's transformative grace, reflecting on where we need His mercy, how we can grow closer to Him, and how we can bring hope to others.

Advent and the Jubilee Year intertwine, both urging us to prepare for the Lord's coming — not just at Christmas, but in the quiet moments of our lives, where he waits to meet us with His love.

Just as Advent calls us to **"Prepare the way of the Lord,"** the Jubilee year too challenges us to embark on a spiritual pilgrimage, seeking God's presence in prayer, the sacraments, and acts of service.

This Advent Season and this Jubilee Year both serve to remind us of the hope that anchors our faith: God's love is constant, and his call to us is unchanging. Let us embrace Pope Francis' invitation to become bearers of hope, reflecting Christ's light in a world often shadowed by fear and despair.

Let's journey together as "Pilgrims of Hope", with hearts prepared, joyfully awaiting God's promises.



Vinnies Christmas Food Bank Drive

Donations have already begun appearing under the Christmas Tree in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

Such a heartening sight to behold!

And an affirming sign that our parishioners are being BEARERS of HOPE, assisting The St Vincent de Paul Society to bring the joy and love embodied in the celebration of Christmas to families and individuals who are struggling and in need of support.



Our new Pastoral Parish Council was commissioned 15 September, 2024

It was an 'extra special' 11am Mass that Sunday when the Dean, Fr Robert Riedling commissioned, welcomed and then presented the new Pastoral Parish Council to the congregation. Afterwards parishioners had the chance to meet and chat with the members during morning tea in the Cloister Café.



Line up post Mass:

Deacon David Dowling, John Starkey, Helen Roumanus, Kerry Giumelli, Fr Robert Riedling, Claire Pospischil, Anne Stanton, Susanna Loto'aniu, Aileen Bernardo, Mili Lee, Martin Graham

What's happened since then?

First Parish Pastoral Council Update:

At our fourth meeting on 16 September we took stock after three meetings together. As expected when a new group comes together, it is taking us time to get to know one another and to clarify our priorities after considering your needs and gifts in the context of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, launched just a month ago. We are continuing to discern what actions will help grow the people of our parish and its visitors.

Deacon Dave spoke to us about the *Alpha Program*. *Alpha* is a series of interactive sessions on life, faith and meaning. It has potential to provide an easy entry point for spiritual growth and opportunities for participants to be of service. We have not made a decision about it yet, but several PPC members have experience with *Alpha* and vouch for its value.

For reflection:

What is a current strength of our parish you would like to see amplified in the coming years?

As always, we welcome your input in person or by email at ppc@stpatscathedral.com.au, and please continue to pray for us:

Kerry Giumelli (Chair), Claire Pospischil (Deputy Chair), Aileen Bernardo, Martin Graham (Secretary), Susanna Loto'aniu, Helena Roumanus, Anne Stanton, John Starkey (with Fr Robert, Fr Tom and Mili Lee, who are ex officio members of the PPC).

Parish Pastoral Council Update: October

"Lift up your hearts!"

This month we finalised the wording of our vision and mission statement. We believe it captures our desire that the parish becomes a stronger catalyst for transformation in both church and world.

The statement will be a touchstone against which our efforts can be judged.

We also made an important decision to run a pilot *Alpha* program to train group facilitators in early 2025, with the intention of making *Alpha* available in the parish following Pentecost. Among other benefits, we believe *Alpha* can be a wonderful formation opportunity. Deacon Dave will be leading this initiative.

Other ideas are simmering. If you would like to contribute or ask a question, please get in touch with any of us in person or through the email address ppc@stpatscathedral.com.au.

And once again, please continue to pray for us.

Comments made by Fr Robert in the Dean's Report in the 2024 Annual Report are worth revisiting here:

.....Pope Francis has said: **"If parishes are not synodal and missionary, neither will the Church be."**

As the new Parish Pastoral Council starts its work, we will be working synodally, both internally and when we engage with the wider parish, seeking to implement key parts of the new Diocesan Pastoral Plan, the document that emerged after the Parramatta Diocesan Synod process over the past twelve month or so.

I would encourage all parishioners, particularly parish ministry leaders, to read and regularly consult this document as it will guide a great deal of what happens in both parish and diocese over the next few years.



For the 47 children pictured below, and their families,
 Saturday, September 7th was a day of great joy and significance:
 It marked yet another milestone event in the children's Faith Journey:
 that of receiving CONFIRMATION
 the third and final Sacrament of Initiation into the Catholic Faith.
 CONFIRMATION marks the strengthening of the Holy Spirit received at Baptism.

Confirmed in the Faith

THE BISHOP'S PRAYER:

*Send upon them
 O LORD,
 the HOLY SPIRIT,
 the PARACLETE;
 Give them
 the spirit of
WISDOM
 and
UNDERSTANDING,
 the spirit of
COUNSEL
 and
FORTITUDE,
 the spirit of
KNOWLEDGE
 and
PIETY;
 fill them with
 the spirit of the
FEAR of THE LORD.
 Through
 Christ Our Lord.
 Amen*



*As a Faith Community, let us pray:
May CONFIRMATION bind
these children more closely
to the Church.*

Sophie Abraham
Liam Andrew
Lleyton Andrew
Christian Babela
Dylan Babela
Marcus Babela
Chanel Anne Barber
Jesse Bebida
Johann Bebida
Sofia Bousimon
Josef Lawrence Casimiro
Iyron Lemuel Casimiro
Benjamin Chu
Diego Nino Alba Concepcion
Jack Curtin
Thomas Curtin
Faith Daniel
Abel Deloso
Naliga Agnes Ebrahim
Aiden Adam Ebrahim
Fiona Fernando
Jude Fernando
Alessio Formica
Chiara Formica
Franklin Gerald
Tracy Gerald
Jonathan Ryan Gunawan
Grace Hoskins
Mackenzie Jones
Daniel Jurisic
Nina Kancijanic
Jessica Lim
Poppy Ljubie
Mikaela Louise Marquez
Jacob Meddows
Ella Palmer
Hugh William Perrett
Joseph Peter
Jessica Selvaraja
Amelia Sivashanmugam
Ethan Sivashanmugam
Jade Tellis
Mark Tellis
Rachel Vinod Thiruviparambil
Elia Wagner
Elaine Xue
Evelyn Zammit

Capturing Sacramental Moments Matters

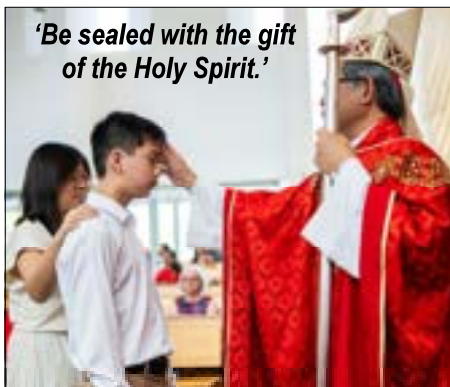
Order of Confirmation,

After candidates were presented to Bishop Vincent, they renewed their Baptismal Promises.

Then came the laying on of Hands by the Bishop, by Fr Riedling and Fr Green.



Conferring of Confirmation: The Bishop anointed each candidate with Oil of Chrism, making the sign of the cross on the forehead, saying their confirmation name, then,



'Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.'



Then touching their cheek, He says, 'Peace be with you.'

The confirmed replied, 'And with your spirit.'

POST
CONFIRMATION,



GROUP PHOTO
at
CATHEDRAL
ENTRANCE



CUTTING
THE
CELEBRATORY
CAKE



RECEIPT of
CONFIRMATION CERTIFICATES
and
A GIFT BIBLE.

CONFIRMATION: *What's in a name?*

A Reflection

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, circa 2015.

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 Manager, is now 32 and works for Our Lady of Dolours Parish, Chatswood.

What do you and James Bond have in common? Probably not much. Chances are though, even if you haven't seen a James Bond movie, you're well aware of the classic, identity-affirming line – "Bond. James Bond".

The world goes crazy with this line, parodying it, appropriating it, using it as a legitimate answer any time someone asks what your name is (guilty). But what is the attraction to the name in doing this?

It's the same attraction we have to our own name when we correct someone on its pronunciation, or remedy the spelling, or smile when someone recognises us as being someone's relative – our name is an intimate glimpse into who we are.

As Catholics, one thing most of us remember about receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation is the saint's name we chose to take on. Just as our first names were purposefully given to us by our parents at Baptism to link us with our family, our Confirmation names are given as a way to unite us with our heavenly family. The Saint chosen to represent us brings more than just a name to our identity, it identifies us with their virtues and they become role models of how we should want to love God.

To know God, to love God, and to serve God is a continuous process of conversion with which we need the strength of Grace to help us through the times we turn away, so we may turn back. Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Holy Spirit gives us this special strength, making us able to defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, unashamed of the Cross.

The world we live in does not make this an easy thing to do though, and like the Apostles in today's Pentecost readings we might be so overcome with fear of judgement or persecution, that we hide our identity as Christians. But it is in the midst of the Apostles' fear that Christ appears to them and not only comforts them, but seals them with the Holy Spirit, *confirming* them as His disciples.

There are people who will forget your name.

There are people who will not even ask for your name.

There are people for whom you will never be anything more, than a name.

**But, through Confirmation though,
an indelible mark was made on your soul –
the recognition of your being as a Christian,
And the seal of your permanent connection with God.
Our God who calls us by the name
with which we associate our character, worth, and being.**

Serving at the Altar matters to Jessica



Jessica Selvenraja wanted to become an altar server after making her First Holy Communion, but had to wait until she was confirmed.

When asked if she would answer some questions about becoming a server, she was keen to do so. Here are her answers.

Why did you want to become an altar server?

I became an altar server, as I felt that I had a connection with the church and God. I had the urge to be in the presence of God and good, and avoid the evil.

How did you feel when you learnt you could serve once you had been confirmed?

I felt a sense of joy, knowing that I could be helpful at mass and in general as well. It made me curious about what I would do, where and how I would learn, and finally, what my role in the church was.

When did you first serve at Mass? How did you feel? What did you do?

I served at 8am mass on 6th October.. At first I thought I would mess up, but from the encouragement of my peers, I pushed through. At the mass, I was the person to hold the bowl while the other person poured the water in, I also was the book bearer. At first, I was scared I would drop the bowl of water, but at the end I was proud to say I didn't.

How did you learn about what to do in this role?

I was confident I could do it as my other peers helped me in my journey and guided me throughout the whole process.

Who has been a help in training you?

There are many people who have helped me with this wonderful journey but a few people stand out to me. First is Miss Marian! [Polizzi]. She used to be my scripture teacher at school, but I don't see her around much in school. She helped me gain confidence and encouraged me to join the crew. Next up, Deacon David! He was one of the people that answered my questions in the past and gave me many pieces of valuable information. Whatever comes out of his mouth is always an answer (sometimes he gets stumped) and a smile that makes my day. Here's a legend, someone who gives the best advice, Father Tom! He too helped me with answering questions, but most importantly, he too helped me when I was serving, correcting my mistakes. And last but not least, the one who brought me on this long journey the moment I said I wanted to be an altar server, Annette! [Hartman]. She was my rock the first time I was serving! She was very patient with me and was very supportive. She was my first teacher who helped me at the altar!

What is your favourite task to do?

So far I've only done the hand washing and the book bearing but I would like to try next is bringing the children to the altar. It seems calm and is something new!

How should every altar server behave when serving?

When seated, they must put their hands in their lap and sit up straight. They must be calm and focus on their surroundings. They also have to look for cues from Father Tom, or said Servers, their guides. Don't, under any circumstances should you be silly and don't ignore the more experienced servers around you.

'My church community is a safe place for me.'

This was the theme of the augural art competition run by the Diocesan Office of Safeguarding for children and young people, this year.

Its aim was to raise awareness of Parramatta Diocese's commitment to zero tolerance for any form of abuse or harm to children or any person.

Congratulations to St Pat's Prizewinners, Zoe and Tom Aguilera



Zoe, aged 8, titled her artwork *Welcome to the Diocese of Parramatta.*



She was awarded "Highly Commended" in the age 5- 10 Category. Her artwork features herself and her three brothers at the Cathedral forecourt with the statue of Pope John Paul II with children.

She wrote, "When I go to St Pat's it feels like I am with a very big family and I feel safe, loved and supported. I hope this artwork helps all children know they will be welcome at my parish, too."



Thomas, aged 15, themed his artwork *'Faith and Friendship'*,



He won 2nd place in the young adults category for his digital composition.

About his artwork, Thomas (Tom) said, "After viewing the theme of the competition, I began to reflect on the safe environment at St Patrick's Cathedral.

Every Sunday after Mass, children and adults gather in the cloister, playing games, catching up, and enjoying the biscuits and other treats that the cloister cafe has to offer. The cloister is a welcoming and familiar environment where the caring and supportive community ensures that everyone feels valued and protected. The friendly faces, the sound of laughter, and the shared sense of belonging all contribute to the feeling of safety and comfort."



The Aguilera Family were present in full force at the special awards ceremony for the Art Competition held at St Patrick's Church, Mary Queen of the Family Parish in Blacktown on Tuesday 15 October 2024.

Proud parents, Kirrily and Oscar and their other two siblings, Benjamin and Zackery, were there to witness Zoe and Tom receive their awards.

Father Robert Riedling, Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral Parish was only too happy to also be on hand to congratulate the young parishioners on their achievement.

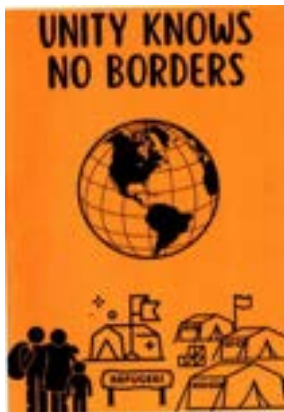
Involvement in parish ministry is a family affair for the Aguileras.

Zoe and Thomas are altar servers at 9.30am Mass on Sundays.

Mother Kirrily (nee McDermott) has a long association with the parish having been raised here and schooled at St Patrick's Primary and then at Our Lady of Mercy College. She currently coordinates the Children's Liturgy Team at 9:30am Mass. Husband Oscar is also a member of the team and is always ready to act as a Warden if needed.

And Benjamin and Zachery, like Zoe and Thomas are altar servers.

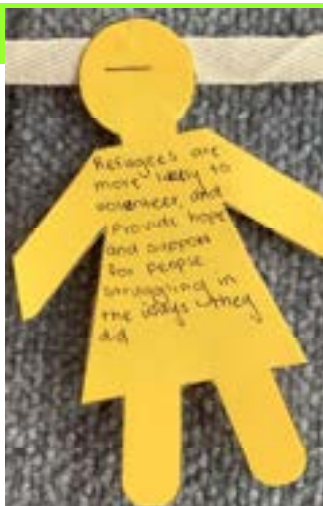
Refugees Matter:



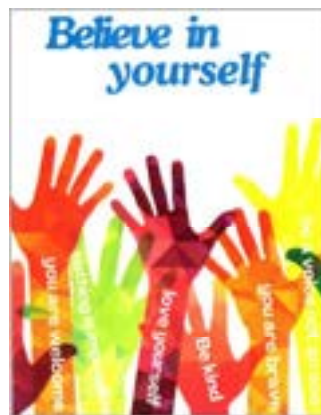
Welcome Friend,
I wish you peace
and safety.

My thoughts and
very best wishes
are with you for
your new life in
Australia.

Elena



A 'Welcome Luncheon'



Welcome Friend,
Welcome to our and now
your country. We are one
but we are many and I
appreciate all of the
unique things that you
have to offer our
community. Your
sufferings and hardship
truly inspire me to be a
better person in my life.
Love Lea

On 14 September, blessed with great weather, the Cathedral Parish and Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS), joined forces to provide a Welcome Community Luncheon for Refugees in the Cloister Function Room.

Back in July a Trivia Fundraiser raised \$2000, which helped make this event a reality. The organisers, which included members of the Parish Social Justice Group, were also grateful to parishioners who donated dessert and drinks for the luncheon and those who attended to meet with people supported by JRS.

Thanks to Catherine McAuley students who did the banners, and bunting that decorated the hall and also for designing 'welcome' cards [see the 2 examples above] that were placed on the tables for the luncheon.

Mahboobeh and Mitra, ladies supported by JRS cooked all the main dishes for the luncheon. And on the day there were 22 students from Catherine McAuley and Parramatta Marist on hand to help in a variety of ways: serving the food, welcoming people, doing activities with the children — drawing and colouring in, playing hopscotch and an old fashioned game called 'fly' to name a few. Also present was the ever popular Spider Man jumping castle.

Thanks to Diane Smith for capturing the event in photos.



Mahboobeh, Mitra & Claire Pospischil



Teachers Genevieve Banks & Debbie Grigson (VP), with students & Fr Robert



Community Welcome Luncheon.



more Social Justice matters

From Claire Pospischil

On Thursday 24 October 2024 another **Preserving Night Session** was held in the presbytery kitchen. A team of four transformed six kilograms of strawberries into 41 jars of strawberry jam. These jars will be donated to both the Vinnies Christmas Hamper Drive plus the Jesuit Refugee Service Foodbank on Victoria Rd.



Thanks to Marilyn, Peter and Bob for your efforts. Thank you again to Joe from *La Fruitteria* for donating the strawberries and to all the parishioners who donated glass jars. The preserving nights have been running for two years now, with around 8-9 sessions held.

Thank you to Fr Robert, for his usual hospitality and support.

Preserving night will be back in early 2025, with plans to continue to make preserves for local needs plus for selling at the monthly parish bazaars. If you're interested, please consider coming to a future session!

On Sunday 28 July 2024, five parishioners volunteered for the Parramatta Council's *National Tree Day* held at Upjohn Park, Rydalmere. We joined a couple of hundred fellow community members on a beautiful late winter morning to plant trees as part of ongoing revegetation work. Aidan, Brendan, Marilyn, Graham and I planted over two hundred plants and tube stock over a couple of hours of work. We were re-planting a muddy slope after rain but managed not to stack!

The friendly *Parramatta Bushcare Team* were there with tips and tricks to help ensure the best survival prospects for the **10,000 (yes that's right!) plants** planted on the day!



We earned the free BBQ at the end!

Tree Day is held in late July each year. It offers people an opportunity to engage with nature and support environmental repair, areas of interest that Pope Francis covered in his *Laudato Si* Encyclical.





A Taizé Reflection evening was organised by the NSW Ecumenical Council at St Patrick's Cathedral on the evening of Tuesday 22nd October, and attracted a number of Christian denominations from as far away as the Blue Mountains and further still - Bathurst !!!

The spirit of Taizé encourages devotion through profound prayer and meditative chants, silence and reflection and is designed to draw the Faithful to a renewed sense of God's presence.

It was the first time this reflection had been held at St Patrick's Cathedral ** and it was set up beautifully in the Chapel, with large icons from Greece and Russia, surrounded by candles, drapes and floor cushions for those preferring to reflect from the floor instead of the pews. The Chapel was full, roomy and casual and the reflection opened with an acoustic guitarist leading splendid praise and worship mantras, with Trish Watts' beautiful vocals leading everyone in singing to such mantras as: *Kyrie Eleison - Let All Who are Thirsty, Come, Sing Praises, See, I Am Near, Come and Fill Our Hearts, Jesus Remember Me, God is Forgiveness*, and more. Brother Ghislain from the Taizé community in France led us by opening in prayer and reflection. He has been leading Taizé reflections in Australia every year since 1991.

The soulful reflection was truly beautiful, nourishing our spirits as we moved in to get closer to our Lord during this sacred time. After an hour of sacred mantras and peaceful reflection, a feast of a supper was provided for us in the Cloister Cafe, where we mingled to connect with our brothers and sisters in Christ from different denominations, mainly Anglicans, who had travelled far to attend — and who *almost* outnumbered us parishioners!

On behalf of Father Robert and parishioners of St Patrick's Cathedral we extend our gratitude and thanks to everyone who contributed to the organising of this event - with particular thanks to Rev. Ray Williamson and the NSW Ecumenical Council for their coordination, to Br Ghislain for coming from France to Australia to share and lead us in this wonderful reflection; to Trish Watts and the music team who lead the service in devotion; to Millie and the Hospitality Team for the fabulous catering and clean up, and to *all* who attended.

Many commented that it would be great to see this event occur annually so more parishioners can experience this wonderful time and expression of love and devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ in such an intimate way together.

Let All Who are Thirsty, Come!

Diane Smith reporting



Br Ghislain is a member of the ecumenical community based in Taizé in south-eastern France. He is responsible for spreading the Taizé message in the Asia-Pacific region.

Taizé is a form of prayer based upon the Scriptures that seeks to promote reconciliation, healing and peace. It is open to all.

****Annette Hartman, longtime parishioner, sets the record straight.**

TAIZÉ PRAYER AT ST PATRICK'S PARRAMATTA

Early in 2004 the then Dean of the Cathedral, Fr Kevin Walsh, introduced Taizé styled Prayer into the Parish. This new (to Parramatta) form of Evening prayer incorporated songs/hymns/chants, meditative Scripture Readings, periods of silence and prayers of intercession and praise that were voiced by the participants.

From the beginning our Taizé Evening Prayer was ecumenical in focus attracting people from the Anglican, Lutheran and other Christian communities, as well as our own parishioners. Members of the various communities were invited to 'lead' all or portion of the monthly gathering.

When Fr Walsh left the Parish, the Taizé gatherings were organized by Silvana Rechichi and me, until dwindling numbers finally forced its cessation.



Senior Matters: Lunch at the Races.



*Belinda Bugo was there
and puts us in the picture.*



Food! Laughter! Fun! Glamour!
Brainstorming!

All this was enjoyed by the seniors who attended this much anticipated luncheon on Melbourne Cup Day which, this year, fell on Tuesday, November 5.

On entering the Cloister Function Room, each guest had the opportunity to participate in the Sweepstakes by buying a "lucky" ticket, or two, or maybe even three!

As usual, Catering put their best "Food Forward" with a light lunch buffet style. Thank you to Fr Tom, Pat and Donna for serving the delicious food, especially in the desserts corner.

Ladies were dressed in their finest attire, with different colours, style and shapes of fascinators adorning their heads. Dear Fr Tom had the daunting duty of judging the "Best Dressed". And the winner he chose was Evelyn Redimerio — and the title fittingly won.

When the Trivia came around, the people at each table were asked to create a name for their group. Martin Graham did a great job as MC, presenting the questions. Much fun and laughter accompanied the activity as the participants brainstormed for the right answers.

The Trivia was Australian focused. For example: *On what date did Australia move to decimal currency?* As the questions kept rolling out, you could see the competitiveness from the groups. The winning team got 19 out of 20 correct.

Right on 3pm, the whole country stopped to watch the running of the 2024 Melbourne Cup Race.

The luncheon attendees had top viewing on the big TV screen set up in the hall for this special occasion. At the finish of the race... Shouts and cheers of joy from winners, and moans of disappointment from those whose horses did not win.

The result: Winner: *Knights Choice*, 2nd place: *Ward Speed*, and 3rd place went to *Okita Soushi*.

Thank you so much to our wonderful parish team at St Patrick's for hosting such an enjoyable afternoon at this annual event, that 'stops the nation'.





Appreciating the Artworks of St Patrick's Cathedral Matters

Martin Graham, recently elected to the new Parish Pastoral Council and member of the Cathedral Choir for about 15 years, is on a 'mission'.

In this article his aim is to open readers' eyes to the significance and beauty of the Cathedral's diverse artworks, focusing here on the Aureole.

Bishop Manning wrote in April 2006 of the Cathedral's simplicity and *"its serene and contemplative character."*

The Cathedral artworks play their part in forming this character. They are not present in the Cathedral as decoration, but have been conceived as an inseparable part of the building's celebration of the liturgy and its creation of special places for prayer, reconciliation, and devotion.

Four Australian artists were commissioned to work in stone, timber, metal, and stained glass and their designs appear in various parts of the Cathedral and Blessed Sacrament Chapel, giving a consistency among the various works rather than producing isolated objects.

The **aureole** over the altar is one of the most obvious artworks in the Cathedral. This halo or band of light encircles the altar as a golden crown, focusing the attention of worshippers there, especially during the Eucharistic Prayer when the celebrant calls down the Holy Spirit before the words of consecration.



The aureole is over 5 m wide and weighs more than 500 kg. Sculptor Robin Blau used 16 mm diameter stainless steel in a circular form with gold-plated steel tips, suggesting flames of fiery energy, or of life bursting forth from a vine. Some will also see it as a crown of thorns, reminding us of Christ's sacrifice on the cross celebrated at every Mass.

Emerging from some of the thorns are very fine gold-plated 3 mm steel rods rising vertically, subtly shimmering, again implying the presence of the Spirit and the new life of the resurrection that is intimately connected with sacrificial suffering.



What other metal artworks by Robin Blau have you noticed in the Cathedral and Chapel? There are many, large and small. Future articles will draw attention to them if you haven't looked first!

A provocation

Have you also observed other metal objects introduced more recently that are unrelated to the original style and form of Blau's creations? Can the Cathedral be updated over time while still respecting the character of the original design ideas?

Credit: St. Patrick's Cathedral Parramatta: The Art Programme.



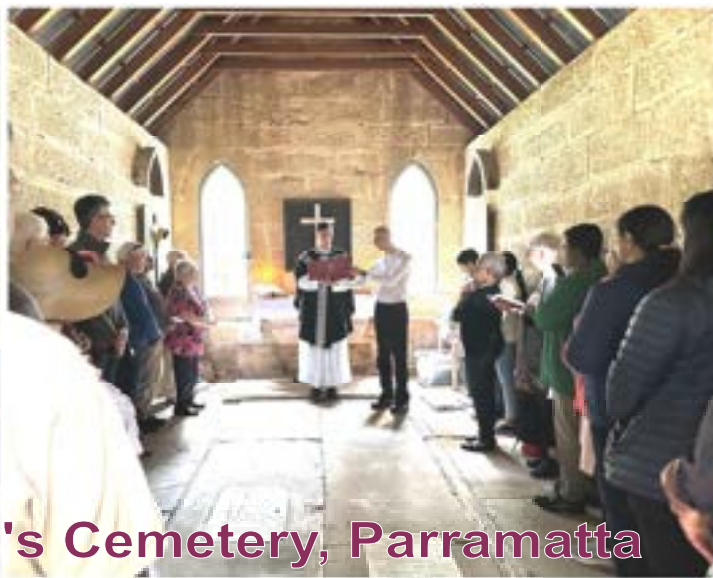
↑ Concert lighting showing the relationship of the aureole to the altar.

Robin Blau (born 1946) is an Australian artist based in Sydney. He graduated in sculpture and jewellery from Sydney College of the Arts.



2003 Dedication of the new St Patrick's Cathedral

Remembering Matters



All Souls Day at St Patrick's Cemetery, Parramatta

Saturday morning of November 2nd gave rise to a gloomy day; the cloudy skies threatened rain, the mood was sombre in keeping with the reason we commemorate All Souls Day each 2nd November, the day of remembrance of all the faithful departed.

Falling on a Saturday this year, the Mass could not be celebrated at the usual 6pm time and was moved to 2pm instead. This year the Day coincided with the Foundation & Heritage Day events in and around Parramatta; so our beloved local historian Judith Dunn OAM was in attendance, looking resplendent in period dress!

Despite the inclement weather conditions, we had a good turnout of parishioners and friends who actively participated in the day's solemn liturgy.

Fr Tom Green was the celebrant for the Mass. After his ordination last year Fr Tom was appointed as Assistant Priest at St Patrick's Cathedral. Recently he celebrated his 1st year of ordination, therefore, this 2nd November marked his very first Mass for All Souls at this, the very first Catholic burial ground in the Colony of NSW. Two of the earliest surviving headstones date back to 1824 indicating that the cemetery was already in use as a Catholic burial ground by that time.

Although these days it is more customary for the priest to wear purple or white vestments, Fr Tom, before Mass began, prepared us to participate by explaining his reason for wearing the traditional black vestments with the silver embroidery.

The black vestments are *"a symbol of mourning, penance, and humility, and are meant to remind us of the reality of death and the need for repentance and spiritual conversion; the silver embroidery is a reminder of the hope of the resurrection that is to come"*; this can all be encapsulated in the saying: *"behind every dark cloud there is a silver lining"*; the "dark cloud" is **death**, the silver lining is the **Resurrected Christ**, the Redeemer of us all who, one day, will come to judge the living and the dead.

For the very first time, during the solemn sacrifice of the Mass we, as a congregation, and led by Fr Tom, sang the responses. It was really beautiful to hear all the voices coming together in prayer, in remembrance of all the people buried in the cemetery and also in honour of all our beloved family members, fellow parishioners and friends who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith:

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

At the conclusion of the Mass, we could not leave without taking the customary group photos outside the St Francis of Assisi Chapel and bidding each other *"farewell"* with the hope of coming together again on *All Souls Day* next year.

Acknowledgments to:

- ♦ the band of **Friends** who cleaned up the Chapel and surrounds in preparation for the day,
- ♦ **Judith Dunn OAM** for illuminating our path of the history of St Patrick's Cemetery,
- ♦ **Friends and parishioners**, who attended the Mass,
- ♦ **Edward Safadi** who assisted Fr Tom at the altar and especially
- ♦ **Fr Tom Green**, for the uplifting liturgy amidst the sadness this day evokes.



by Silvana Rechichi
5/11/2024

Thanks to Bob Edgar, President, of the Friends of St Patrick's Cemetery Group and member Silvana, for all the photos submitted.

On page 15 Judith Dunn comments re the Friends Clean Up of the Cemetery Chapel for All Souls Day and the Mass celebrated there.

Worth Reflection:



Pope Francis comments on All Souls Day:

He asks: *Do you desire heaven above everything else?*

He also said that All Souls' Day is a good occasion to ask

"if our desires have anything to do with heaven."



The Sacrament of Marriage Matters



Therefore a man leaves his father and mother
and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh
Genesis 2:24

Celebrating the Journey

Married couples from across the Diocese gathered at St Patrick's Cathedral on Sunday 27th October for this year's Annual Wedding Anniversary Mass.

For them it was the chance to give thanks to God, to renew their marriage vows and to receive a blessing to help them remain faithfully committed to each other.

Over one hundred couples from the Diocese's 47 parishes registered to have their names and years of marriage included in the Special Booklet and to receive a certificate of congratulations signed by Bishop Vincent.

Congratulations to the wedded couples of the Cathedral Parish, pictured below, who celebrated wedding anniversaries, some of extra special significance!

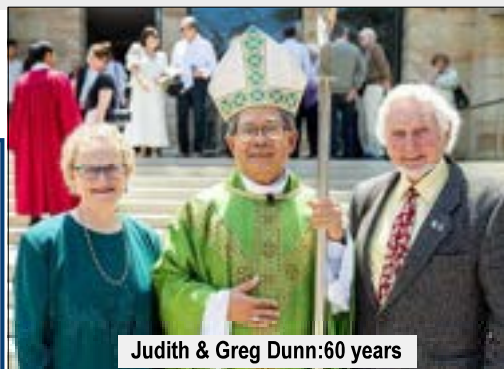
During his homily Bishop Vincent commented:

Today, we join with many couples who are here to give thanks to God for the gift of marriage, which they have shared with each other and their loved ones. They have sought to emulate the self-sacrificial love of Christ, and I am sure they have realised how that effort often runs up against their human limitations. Today is, therefore, the day to give thanks and to renew our commitment to live with the mind and heart of God.

Today, we honour and thank these couples for their commitment to Christian marriage and to the values of the Gospel.

As a domestic church and the basic unit of a Christian community, they endeavour to live according to the pattern of the self-emptying God against the culture of self-interest.

By their generosity, patience and selflessness, they model the God that Jesus revealed. Their witness in marriage is a sign of hope and renewal of God's everlasting love to his people.



Judith & Greg Dunn: 60 years



Angelo & Carmen Cutajar: 60 years



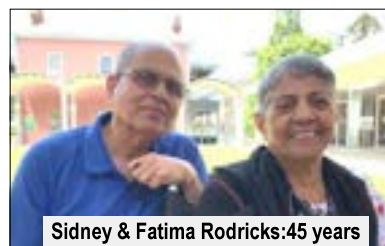
Claire & Frank Duff: 60 years



Michael & Denise Samson: 54 years



Marian & Baldo Polizzi: 52 years



Sidney & Fatima Rodricks: 45 years



Robert & Joanne Edgar: 40 years

For Dennis and Aileen their anniversary photo with the Bishop had to be a family affair with their 3 children: Jacob, Caitlin and Ava.

Ministry matters to this family: Aileen is a member of the recently formed Parish Pastoral Council, Caitlin is in the Choir and Jacob and Ava are Altar Servers.



Dennis & Aileen Bernardo: 25 years

Special mention matters for these couples

Miguel & Perla Lombardi: Married 63 years!



They were the second longest married couple listed in the special Wedding Anniversaries Booklet.

They were long time parishioners until about 4 years ago, when they had to move to a retirement village.

They were absolutely jubilant to 'come home' to St Pat's to attend the Anniversary Mass and catch up with friends.

Andy & Carmen Cutajar actually celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary on Thursday, 8th August.



They asked Fr Chris del Rosario to come back to St Pat's to celebrate 12:30pm Mass that day. During the Mass they renewed their vows and exchanged rings, after which Fr Chris gave them a blessing.

A celebratory luncheon in the Cloister Function Room followed. On display were photos of their wedding day plus Papal Blessings for all their significant anniversaries.



For Greg Dunn, renewing his wedding vows after 60 years of wonderful marriage was an emotional moment.



After receiving the Bishop's blessing, Greg kissed his wife Judith tenderly on the forehead and pulled her closer to him.

"We're very opposite but together we make one," Judith said, adding that "marriage is like a shiny shoe — it rubs and it pinches, but now we're like a pair of old slippers because we're so comfortable together."

Asked what has kept them together over the decades, Judith said simply, *"It's hitting speed bumps, but working your way through it and not giving up."*

Cemetery Update: by Judith Dunn

Despite the gloomy weather with mizzling rain, a goodly number attended *All Souls Day Mass* in St Francis Chapel at the cemetery.

The week previously, *Friends of St Patrick's Cemetery* held a working bee to make all ready and on the day, Bob Edgar gave a last quick sweep and we were pristine and ready for Mass.

There were no flowers for the altar so I did a quick run around the cemetery and made an arrangement of creamy wattle, lilac Salvation Jane and tall Dianella (native flax) complete with purple berries.

Father Tom officiated with Edward serving, Father Tom in black vestments which he explained the significance for us — the first to wear black since Father Larkey, years ago and it was very fitting. The acoustics in the little chapel accentuated the responses beautifully as we honoured both our pioneer Catholics buried in the cemetery and all souls on this special day. A lovely peaceful Mass.

I am in colonial costume as I had been conducting tours for Parramatta Council at the Foundation Day Festival, then dashed to the cemetery to open up.



visitation matters Happy Birthday Paul



A 96th birthday celebration was held for Paul Peters on 17th September 2024 at Anglicare Village, Rooty Hill.

Maurie Mouyat (L) and Ian Goldthorpe (R) from St Pat's Parish joined with Paul's son Isaac for the special birthday occasion.

Paul served as an Acolyte for many years in the parish and was a regular leader of the Rosary before 12:30pm Mass on week-days.

Maurie and Ian have visited Paul often to ensure him he is not forgotten.

In this fascinating trip into Parramatta's history, Judith Dunn OAM reveals how politics and religion were often inextricably linked.

Yet again, Judith's prodigious wealth of knowledge will amaze readers.



HUGH TAYLOR, PARRAMATTA POLITICIAN

Hugh Taylor, the eldest son of ex-convict Hugh Taylor (senior) and Elizabeth Brown, was born in Parramatta in March 1823. Educated at Daniel Thurston's School he later graduated to The King's School. How the family rose above their convict past to obtain excellent education

is unknown.

Hugh Taylor became a well-known butcher in Parramatta.

Although he became an agent for some Sydney newspapers and wrote extensively for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, his main public life was in politics ⁱ.



In 1846 he married Frances Connor of Flushcombe, Prospect, at St Patrick's Church ⁱⁱ and converted to Catholicism.

At first, Taylor supported James Byrnes electorally and during this friendship, learned much about politics. Elected to Parramatta Council in 1865, Taylor retained this position until 1897, serving as Mayor from 1871 to 1874, ⁱⁱⁱ but there was a major break between the Byrnes and Taylor families which appeared to be inevitable. Charles Joseph Byrnes became the opponent of Taylor locally and in Parliament. Both were from large families with many supporters; Byrnes was a Protectionist and Taylor a Free Trader. Sectarian division also alienated the families. While Byrnes headed the local Orangemen, Irish Catholics got behind Taylor. ^{iv} The latter cultivated the image of 'the poor man's friend', selling meat and bread cheaply, especially before elections! Fourteen years of division between the two families enlivened local politics.

When Hannibal Hawkins Macarthur was elected as a member of the Legislative Council, it was a red letter day. Hugh Taylor oversaw the celebrations on Gaol Green (Prince Alfred Square), opposite St Patrick's Church. A bullock and six fat sheep, roasted whole, with five or six hogsheads of Underwoods ale were provided for the townsfolk. Two long tables set for 100 people were arranged on the green. The feast was followed by sports in charge of Hugh Taylor. ^v

In 1871 Taylor was elected Mayor and was re-elected for the next two years, but not before high drama! 1872 saw Taylor elected to Parliament as Member for Parramatta with further excitement caused by sectarian violence. This was provoked by larrikins brought to Parramatta by the Protestant Political Association, an association that naturally backed Byrnes. Thomas Moxham, Mayor of Parramatta from 1897 and member of another prominent local family, was an active member of Orange Lodge and The Australian Protestant Defence Association to Combat Catholic Power, showing that sectarianism was rife. ^{vi}

In 1873 all 12 aldermen and 200 ratepayers were in attendance at a vital meeting to elect a Mayor. C J Byrnes and Hugh Taylor were both nominated which deadlocked in a 6 all draw. A second meeting was called where John Taylor, brother of Hugh, 'spoke for some hours' ^{vii} in support of his brother's candidature, until police were called. The Council Clerk, Mr Sydney Wickham, announced his intention to call a meeting every 48 hours until the issue was resolved. Sometimes all aldermen attended these meetings with voting reaching the same result of a deadlocked, 6 all. Sometimes only one party attended resulting in a lack of a majority. Eventually C J Byrnes stepped aside for Alderman Dixon from his party, but the Taylor camp would not vote for him either. After a staggering 14 tedious meetings the impasse was overcome by the death of Alderman Williams, Parramatta's first Mayor, reducing the Byrnes camp to 5 members. Alderman Taylor promptly requested a special meeting and Hugh Taylor was at last elected Mayor and the deadlock was over, resolved by the death of Williams. ^{viii}

When Taylor won the seat of Parramatta in 1876, he had to promptly resign as ineligible because he supplied meat to government institutions, but won again in 1877, the issue obviously resolved. ^{ix} He formed a lasting friendship with (Sir) Henry Parkes, regularly supplying meat to his home in Faulconbridge and acted as best man at Parkes' third marriage.

In the House Taylor was seen as a mild radical, opposing squatters and defending free selectors, championing most working men's causes. Where he excelled was as Parramatta's local member winning improvements including having Parramatta incorporated into the area covered by the penny post. He was a magistrate, worked on the committee of Parramatta District Hospital, the Catholic Orphanage and Parramatta Park. He was also president of Parramatta Jockey Club and the Cricket Club while strongly supporting the Fire Brigade and the Protestant Orphan School at Rydalmere. On the break-up of the Catholic Orphanage at Parramatta, Mother Gertrude established the Magdalen Refuge at Tempe and Taylor continued support to the Good Samaritan Sisters in every way. ^x

Taylor was defeated by Dowell O'Reilly in 1894 and was preparing to again contest the seat when he died of heart disease aged 75 years on 13 December 1897. The account of his funeral shows the esteem in which he was held.

Catholic and Protestant churches rang muffled bells as not less than 700 to 800 people assembled to walk behind the hearse from St Patrick's Church to the cemetery. Besides those on foot, it was estimated 100 carriages were in the procession. Local government officials, firemen, schoolchildren and members of every institution in the town and district lined the route. Father O'Reilly officiated, assisted by priests from North Parramatta, Granville, Rydalmere and Waitematta (Ryde). Mayors and Aldermen attended from Parramatta, Granville, Auburn, Ryde, Prospect and Sherwood. Many attended from Taylor's political life: the Colonial Secretary, Minister for Public Instruction,

Cont'd next page

Archival Matters *This historical treasure comes home to St Patrick's*

On 19 September, 2024, Pat Preca, Secretary received the following letter:

Dear Pat,

The St Patrick's Parish has always meant so much to our family. Now with both our parents deceased we have no family members left in the parish.

Packing up the house my Grandfather's (Robert Andrews) Hibernian ceremonial collar has reappeared. We believe he was a member of the society, (Parramatta Branch:432) in the 1920s. In the 60s I remember Mr Frank Keane would wear his collar every week whilst organizing the plate collections. As a child I remember thinking how pretty it was. Presumably one would wear their ceremonial collar with pride.

I'm hoping the Cathedral has an historical archive where our grandfather's collar might find a place? If not, please let me know and I'll collect it, and perhaps find it a home elsewhere.

Kind Regards



Debra Andrews



Robert Andrews' Collar

From: debhome@bigpond.net.au

Friday, September 27, 2024 13:36

To: Patricia Preca

<secretary@stpatscathedral.com.au>

Subject: Re: Ceremonial Collar

Thank you so much for getting back to me Pat, it's very much appreciated. I've been concerned about where the collar might end up.

I did a small story for Marian back in 2020 (?) on the family's history in the parish and the collar was included in it.

Although perhaps a story on the Hibernian and Friendly Society might be an interesting article?

I've attached images of medals that one received after holding a presidency position for your interest also. These were also in the article I wrote for Marian (St Pat's Matters).

Againmany thanks.

Kind regards,

Debra Andrews

To which Pat Preca replied:

Dear Debra,

You have certainly sparked the interest of a local historian. [Judith Dunn]. We most definitely will keep this in a safe place. These are treasures and deserve a good home. So nice that your family has kept it safe all these years.

Pat

September 26

Email from Judith Dunn, our Historian, to Pat

I was wrong guessing he [Robert Andrews] was a Forrester. I have done a bit more digging. There was another Catholic Benefit Society operating at St Pat's in the early days which is a better fit.

The Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society was established in Victoria in the late 1860s to assist Irish Catholics with funeral and sickness benefits. There were also branches in other states.

This is a physical description of a collar extant in Victoria and fits with the collar at the Cathedral although "ours" is much more simple.

Physical Description:

A broad double collar made of velvet with gold bullion fringe and embroidery. The main motif shows a Celtic cross with harp, obelisk, tree and animal passant at left, with shield, rising sun, emu and kangaroo at right. These elements are worked in gold bullion, yellow, green, blue, white, red and brown embroidery threads. An applied red ribbon is below the cross, the words FAITH HOPE CHARITY are worked in narrow bullion and the ribbon is edged with gold spiralling metal. Gold bullion and similar metal spirals are used to work shamrocks below the ribbon and radiating lines behind the cross. At the top of the design the letters H.A.C.B.S. are worked in thick gold bullion. The letters PGP are worked at upper left of chest area, with VIC worked on the right.

This is a much better match with the Hibernian Catholic Benefit Society than Forresters. St Pat's Hibernian Society started in 1907 with a membership of 12 but by 1935 there was a membership of 150. There were only three such groups in NSW. In 29 years of operation in Parramatta the branch dispersed 2,400 pounds in sick pay and 900 pounds in funeral expenses.

Hugh Taylor Parramatta Politician *cont'd from previous page*

Principal Under Secretary, George Thornton MLC, Dowell O'Reilly MP, Farnell MLA besides Major Burns, Major Lee, Quong Tart and Archdeacon Gunther from St John's Church. Chief mourners were Taylor's three sons and his brother John.^{xi}

Hugh Taylor could be described as a generous hearted larrikin who was deeply enthusiastic about Parramatta issues, respected by followers and opponents alike. Prominent in his funeral procession was his old antagonist, C J Byrnes when Hugh Taylor was laid to rest in St Patrick's Cemetery.

ⁱ Australian Dictionary of Biography

ⁱⁱ BDM

ⁱⁱⁱ Whittaker, A M. Shaping a City – 150 years of Parramatta Council

^{iv} Australian Dictionary of Biography

^v The City of Parramatta 150th Anniversary Celebrations

^{vi} Dunn, Judith The Parramatta Cemeteries,

^{vii} All Saints Jubilee History of Parramatta

^{viii} Ibi

^{ix} Kass, Liston, McClymont. *Parramatta, A Past Revealed*

^x Australian Dictionary of Biography

^{xi} Funeral account, SMH December 1897

Thanking St Pat's Volunteers Matters

"WE FEEL WE MUST BE CONTINUALLY THANKING GOD FOR YOU..." 2 THESSALONIANS 1:3



Friday night, 15th November saw the Cloister Function Room 'packed to the rafters' with volunteers and abuzz with welcoming vibes.

Why? It was the annual **Thank-You Dinner** in appreciation for the many ways St Pat's people serve the parish.

Just what do St Pat's volunteers do?

The list might not only surprise readers, but perhaps inspire you to become a volunteer in some capacity.



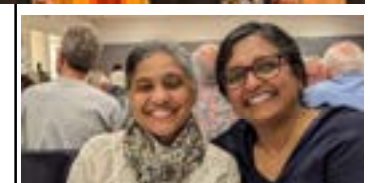
Acolytes, Altar Servers, Readers Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, Musicians & Choristers, RCIA Team, Parish Finance Council & Parish Pastoral Council, Children's Liturgy Team, Special Religious Educators, Social Justice Group, Friends of St Patrick's Cemetery, Hospitality Team, Counters, Wardens, Bellringers, Gift Shop Helpers, Events Helpers, Palm Cutters, Christmas & Easter Decorators.



According to Cathedral Parish Manager Mili Lee, 144 volunteers were present at the dinner. Consequently, not everyone gets to feature in the Photo Gallery of the jolly occasion! Also, not all volunteers attended. Which begs the question: how many volunteers does St Pat's have?



Mile Lee's heartfelt write up about the **Thank You Dinner** in the Sunday Bulletin for 17th November deserves to accompany this report. It is featured on the adjacent page. We thank her for allowing it to be included here.



Last Friday, our parish gathered for a special evening to celebrate and honour the heart of our community - our extraordinary volunteers.

Hosted by Fr Robert and the parish staff, the *Volunteers Thank You Night* brought together 144 dedicated individuals, from our youngest altar servers to our most seasoned volunteers in their 80s. This year, the bell ringers group joined us for the first time.

Each of these remarkable people contributes to the vibrancy and strength of our parish family. Whether their efforts are seen, or quietly carried out behind the scenes, their time, energy, and talents are invaluable.

Over recent weeks, our Parish Finance Committee has highlighted the stewardship of our parish, emphasising how vital financial giving is to our mission. However, our volunteers' generosity — offered through acts of service — stands as an equally immeasurable gift. Their dedication and love are the very foundation of our community, and for this, we are deeply grateful.

This special evening was also an opportunity to recognise and bid farewell to several long-serving volunteers who are stepping back after many years of devoted service:

Joanne and Bob Edgar: After over 40 years of service across numerous ministries, including Hospitality, Music, Parish Pastoral Council, Friends of St Patrick's Cemetery, Social Justice Group, Mahjong and parish events, Joanne and Bob are relocating to the Southern Highlands.



Their contributions have profoundly enriched our community, and we send them with our prayers and blessings as they begin this new chapter.

Cathy Dearie: For 15 years, Cathy has faithfully served on the Parish Finance Committee and for 30 years as a Reader, and an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.



As she prepares to leave the parish in the new year, we offer our heartfelt thanks for her service and wish her every success and happiness in her new journey.

To all our volunteers:

Thank you for embodying the love of Christ in your service. Your devotion and selflessness allow us to fulfill our mission as a parish and bring God's light into the lives of so many. Let us pray for all our volunteers, asking God to bless them abundantly and to continue guiding their service.

"Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:21)

It matters to say 'Farewell'



Although Joanne & Bob said Farewell at the Volunteers' *Thank You Dinner*, we are grateful they took time to pen a Note of Adieu to the wider parish community.

Our loss, Moss Vale's gain!

DELAYED DEPARTURE 25th November 2024

Persistent procrastination has finally given way to definitive decision-making. The long-mooted move to the country has finally come. We are swapping the wilds of Westmead for the milds of Moss Vale.

After more than 40 years of being parishioners at St Patrick's, Parramatta, we go in search of another faith community. Into another diocese even.

Our time in Parramatta has been marked with great joy and great sadness. The joy has been in the sharing of the many momentous liturgical celebrations and social gatherings along with the sadness at the devastating loss of our Cathedral by fire in 1996. There has also been the forming of many enduring friendships within the parish, tempered by the passing of many older parishioners and some not so old. In more than four decades we have witnessed a never-ending procession of clergy and parishioners coming and going. A truly dynamic parish.

The saddest loss was that of our daughter Elizabeth in 1986 and our son Patrick in 1988, both 6 months old. At this time our parish community held us close with most loving support, spiritually and in practical ways. At the end of 1989 our son Max arrived and was joyfully received by the whole parish. He is now 34 and with his partner Kaylene has gifted us a grandson, Levi, who is now three years old. Truly a great joy.

Joanne and I have been involved in numerous ministries and events over the years and of these, despite our change of address, I think Hospitality might be the most difficult to break away from. I have a suspicion that Marian has not completely erased us from the roster!

One of the highlights of my involvement in the parish was being on the committee with Marian Polizzi and Phil Russo to bring about the installation and dedication (on St Patrick's Day, 2019) of a plaque that honours and acknowledges the First Nations people on whose ancestral land our Cathedral stands. The plaque is located adjacent to the main Cathedral steps.

In all our activities in the parish we have received much more than we have given. We know that we go with the love of our dear St Patrick's Parish. Joanne and I will forever be part of this community and you will forever be a part of us. We look forward to visits from anyone who is venturing into the Southern Highlands.

Thank you all,
Joanne and Bob Edgar

Paying Tribute Matters

Back in 2010, Sister Ailsa Mckinnon RSM was Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Mercy when she gave the address below at Bishop Kevin Manning's Farewell on 11th April. Today she is a member of the Curia and the Parramatta Diocesan Mission Enhancement Team.



I stand here today to pay tribute to Bishop Kevin Manning on behalf of the religious of the Diocese. It is a little known fact that there are almost 400 men and women religious from 53 Congregations who live and or minister in the Parramatta Diocese. In Bishop Kevin's time several orders of religious priests have added to this number. We span the length and breadth of the Diocese and are involved in many and varied ministries ranging from parish work, education, social welfare, health and aged care and much more. A lot of the work is done in small ways and away from the public spotlight and, of course, some are in retirement while others lead the contemplative life of prayer and support. Then there are the larger organisations whose buildings stand as symbols of the work which we do on behalf of the Church. More importantly, though, is the work that is carried on in each of these buildings, these days, done in collaboration with many co-workers.

Over the last 12 years the Bishop has become well known to the religious of the Diocese. On many occasions he has hosted gatherings for us and his hospitality has been warm and welcoming. He has taken the opportunity at these gatherings to show appreciation for the Christian witness religious give through our lives and ministry. And we are grateful for that.

More frequently he has taken the opportunity to connect with the religious as he has come to parishes and religious organisations during his times of visitation. One remarkable aspect of these meetings is his ability as a good pastor to call each by name and show genuine interest in individual's welfare and ministry.

As one reads the history of the Catholic Church there are stories of tensions and even conflict between Bishops and religious orders. This has not been the experience of religious in the Parramatta Diocese over the last 12 years. Bishop Kevin has a real respect for the different charisms of religious orders, the roles we fulfil and the manner in which we go about our ministries in collaboration with the relevant bodies be they priests, other religious, Diocesan offices or civil groups. He has enabled us to carry on our work without interference or criticism. We have been supported and encouraged, and for that we are grateful too. Ah, Mary Mackillop would have appreciated Bishop Kevin's support during her difficult times!

Then too, a number of religious have been involved in work in the Diocesan offices and on boards and committees. Kevin's leading role in the Australian Bishops research into the role of women in the Australian Catholic Church has sensitised him to the issues facing women in the church. Consequently, many more women, both religious and other lay, have found themselves in decision making roles in the Diocese and elsewhere.

Religious share with Bishops on occasions, a prophetic role in church and society. In Bishop Kevin we have seen examples of prophecy in action.

This leadership role has motivated us religious in our endeavours as well. His involvement in social justice issues, particularly in employment relations is an example of this.

Likewise, his involvement in interfaith dialogue with members of the Islamic faith. He is well known for the efforts he has made to extend the hand of friendship to our Muslim brothers and sisters. Participants at the Catholic Religious Australia conference last year were highly impressed when Bishop Kevin spoke of how he went about forging these friendships. It is typical of his style – extend the hand, smile and start a casual conversation. He gave us many practical ideas as to how to be likewise engaged in interfaith dialogue.

Over his twelve years as Bishop of Parramatta I have had the opportunity to work closely with Bishop Kevin on many projects. I have always found him open in his approach. He certainly knows his own mind, but at the same time is open to hearing all points of view. He has an ability to listen carefully, to think through the issues and to respond from a place of wisdom. Hence his contributions have been significant. His capacity for hard work has been balanced by his ability to take time for prayer and relaxation.

Kevin, your leadership of the Diocese has brought it through significant times. You have safely steered the ship from its fledgling years to maturity. Western Sydney knows of the Catholic Church and is much enriched by the witness given through the lives of its people. You are now entitled to sit back and enjoy years of healthy and happy retirement. Our blessings go with you. May God be with as you enjoy a more relaxed lifestyle.



Looking Back Matters

In the last issue of our magazine we mourned the death of Bishop Emeritus Kevin Manning. Here we look back at his farewell from St Patrick's Cathedral Parish, on 11th April, 2010. After that Mass, when I, as editor of St Pat's Matters, asked the Bishop for a copy of his farewell address, he graciously acquiesced. Readers can now revisit that reflection on his tenure as the second Bishop of Parramatta.



I am deeply grateful to all of you for your presence today. It means much to me. I thank those who have spoken this afternoon. Their words are indeed touching and much appreciated. My words too are expressions of gratitude and appreciation. Gratitude to God who called me to become a priest, and later gave me the privilege of serving you as bishop of Parramatta.

For the last thirteen years, we have been involved together, dear Friends, in working to spread the Gospel. Despite our sinfulness and limitations, we have placed our hope in the living God and God's grace has been poured out in abundance.

Cathedral

When I came to the Diocese, one of the challenges was the rebuilding of the cathedral, St Patrick's, which has such a long and proud tradition in the Catholic life of Australia. I thank all who collaborated in the task of rebuilding in whatever way, big or small.

I will always remember a day when I was walking through St Albert's Park on my way over to the presbytery to lunch. At that time there were more shrubs in the park than there are now, and quite a few homeless men could be found sleeping there. On this particular day, one of the men approached me with a paper bag scrunched in his hand. He offered the bag with the words "we had a whip-around, and that's for your church, Father". As I said on the day of the Consecration of the Cathedral, St Patrick's is a home for everyone.

Essence of Christianity

Behind me is the great Crucifix of the Cathedral and when I was looking at it earlier, the words of St Augustine came to me.

"Why", he asked "are we slow to believe that we will one day live with God? A much more incredible thing has already happened: God died for us".

That is what we see on the Crucifix, that is what we have just celebrated with great solemnity at Easter, and that is the essence of our faith.

I appreciate and give thanks to God for all that you do to bring the Good News of our faith to others. I am not talking about spectacular events but the daily round of family life, work and social activities, participation in parish life, the transmission of faith in your families, in the RCIA, as catechists, in your support of vocations to the priesthood and the religious life, and in the many ways that you witness to Christ in your lives. I am grateful to all the people of the Diocese for their faithful living of the Christian life, for the charity, compassion and forgiveness which they show in their daily lives. Their contribution cannot be measured in human terms. God alone knows, and God alone rewards.

Priests and Seminary

I thank you for the support you give to the priests, support for which I know they are grateful. I have had the opportunity to thank the priests of the Diocese on other occasions, but I am delighted to do so again publicly. I thank them in particular for their support in the decision to begin our own seminary, a very significant undertaking for the Diocese.

Committees

There are many Diocesan committees, and although attending meetings is a tedious business, it is through the work of these Committees, and the generosity of the people in the parishes, that the Diocese is able to offer assistance to our brothers and sisters who are suffering through poverty, unemployment, depression, illness and old age. I thank the members of the many diocesan committees.

Religious

With affection, I acknowledge the religious of the Diocese who quietly work away in the service of God's people. Your support and prayers have been a great encouragement to me.

Public Life

I thank those in public life at municipal, state and commonwealth levels. The State and Federal members of Parliament of all political parties have been generous with their time, and supportive of Christian life in the Diocese.

Staff and Parishioners of St Patrick's

The staff of the Diocesan Office have my unwavering respect and gratitude. A lean machine – they operate with great efficiency and unfailing good humour. The staff of the Cathedral presbytery helped me to create a home there, and enabled me to offer hospitality to visitors. I am grateful to them and to the parishioners of St Patrick's parish who generously support diocesan events in the Cathedral.

Ecumenical and Interfaith

One of the privileges of being Bishop of Parramatta was the opportunity to become involved in ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, and I greet the members of those faith communities who are here this afternoon.

A Season

At this moment, words spoken by Pope Paul VI when reflecting on Christ's words to St Peter come to mind:

"You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church". Pope Paul VI said that powers were given to people for the service of the Church, but only for a season. We are given the privilege of serving the Church and contributing to her mission – but only for a season.

My season here has come to an end and a new bishop is beginning his season. Do support Bishop Anthony, love him, and work with him, listen to his words, and accept them with open minds.

I am mindful of the words of St John: "Beloved, if God loves us, we must also love one another (1 Jn 4:11)." As I take my leave from loving friends, let us remember that, although, all farewells are tinged with sadness, we must see these changes as part of the bigger picture, as part of God's plan for the Church of Parramatta. We are all privileged to serve God's people, his Church, even if only for a season.



Mourning after

A grief-stricken ZARA TAI OCV, mourning the death of Bishop Emeritus Kevin Manning on 15 July, 2024, wrote an article for Catholic Outlook, about her long-time friend and mentor.



I am in Mudgee, just over an hour's drive from Coolah, the town from where Bishop Kevin Manning grew up. Coolah is just over 300km from where I met Bishop Kevin in 1991 in Armidale, NSW, around 33 years ago. I was a student at the university and Bishop Kevin was a newly-consecrated bishop.

I first met Bishop Kevin one freezing evening in August 1991. I jumped into his car and was really impressed that a bishop could drive a manual vehicle. Soon after, Bishop Kevin invited me for 'happy hour' cuppas at the Armidale Chancery. I was often surprised to see him, a bishop, in his singlet and shorts jogging around Armidale. On a pastoral level, Bishop Kevin comforted me when my Chinese grandmother died and my parents divorced and I was all alone away from my family.

In the years that followed, no matter where I was, Bishop Kevin found me and would ring me, whether it would be in the Kimberley, the Riverina or the Blue Mountains. Whenever I returned, Bishop Kevin would invite me for a meal or a cuppa.

When Bishop Kevin became Bishop of Parramatta, he did not know I was living in his diocese. I surprised him when I turned up to a consultation meeting on the new cathedral. He gave me a massive bear hug. Soon, Bishop Kevin appointed me to committees in the Diocese. I was so frightened on what he had gotten me into, but I needn't have worried. Bishop Kevin would also help me when Church politics became problematic.

It wasn't always roses with Bishop Kevin. He gave me a good kick up the a** whenever I needed it. However, when I was consecrated by Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv in 2017 (thank you so much, Bishop Vincent), Bishop Kevin came from the nursing home in Bathurst to concelebrate. This would be Bishop Kevin's last public appearance in Parramatta.

During the liturgy after the consecration rite, Bishop Vincent gave me a hug. Bishop Kevin managed to stand up and embraced me. It was an incredible and touching moment. Bishop Kevin, whom I had met over 25 years earlier, was with me the day I was consecrated to Christ and in the cathedral which he built.

As Bishop Kevin became frailer in the nursing home, he allowed his visitors to nurse and feed him and to spend time with him. Life had come full circle. I was no longer the student with her bishop but a middle-aged friend who was tending to the needs of her spiritual father in his twilight years. It was a time of special grace, blessing and love.

My last visit with Bishop Kevin was at the end of March 2024. He was unable to say my name, but always recognised me by my usual greeting: "How's my favourite bishop?". On this visit, Bishop Kevin was bright, huggy and cheeky. We arm wrestled, which he enjoyed.

As the time came for me to leave, I said to Bishop Kevin, "It's Holy Week. Do you want to pray?" Hand in hand we made the sign of the cross. We prayed the Our Father, Hail Mary and a Glory Be. It was a simple, solemn and special time between a frail old man and a long-time friend who loved him.

I was unable to see Bishop Kevin again, but I am so blessed that that was my final meeting with him.

I feel so honoured to have known Bishop Kevin all my adult life and in two dioceses. Some would know Bishop Kevin as Fr Kevin Manning, owing to his earlier time in Bathurst and Canberra. Others may have met him once or twice or not at all, but still pray for the late bishop. Each story, each memory is special – no matter the depth or length – they are all important.

The three days of prayers; Vespers on Thursday, Mass of Christian Burial on Friday and the memorial service and burial in Coolah on Monday, is like the Easter triduum. This last trip to Coolah is the tomb and the resurrection.

As we walk this final journey to Coolah and for time to follow, in prayer I say to you, dear Bishop Kevin, who art in heaven; **"Until we meet again, my favourite Bishop".**

Editor's Note: The OCV after Zara's name indicates she belongs to the Order of Consecrated Virgins.



Zara, Fr Galbert, Fr Bob, Maureen Sewell, Fr John Paul, Fr Wim, Bev Hackett



farewell Bishop Kevin at Coolah Cemetery.

It focuses on the values and service that make this family a perfect role model for today's families.

It takes us beyond the Birth of Jesus, that Christmas will soon celebrate, painting a serene, simple existence.....before challenges would enter their future lives.



The Family

Joseph was a tallish man, with warm brown eyes and calloused hands. He was the local carpenter at Nazareth, where he lived with Mary, his wife, and Jesus, his son. Joseph was always willing to help others when repairs were needed to be done, or a new room needed to be added for a growing family. He took great pride in his work, and as a result of that, his services were always in demand. He did not even mind helping old Esther, who lived two doors down, and was always grumbling about her lot in life. Joseph always smiled and did what she wanted, and although she did not stop griping and grumbling, it was noted that she was not as hard to get along with after Joseph had been there to help her. She would always bring some of her special herb bread, for which she was quite well-known, for the family as part payment for the work that had been done. Joseph was not a garrulous man by nature; he had a gentleness about him that belied his looks and beneath his quiet exterior, laughter twinkled in his eyes.

Mary, his wife, was also very popular with all the neighbours and whenever anyone had a problem, she always lent an understanding ear. She had a serenity of countenance and a beautiful smile which lit up her whole face. Her eyes were sympathetic and compassionate. Always ready to go to the assistance of those in need. She seemed to carry with her an aura of peace, which touched all those to whom she ministered. No one who asked for her help or advice, was left unaided. Even if she could not solve the problem, or heal the illness, just her being there was a great comfort and many of her neighbours felt an indefinable healing whenever she came. She was often approached by someone or other – even if there was no great problem – it was as if being with her made you feel wonderful.

Jesus, their son, was another enigma. He was tall and had brown hair, with a ready smile, which highlighted his expressive brown eyes. He loved to laugh! He played games with the other children and always enjoyed the fun that they had together, but it was noted that he always played fairly and supported the other children when they were hurt or did not seem happy. No one knew just what it was that he did, but he had the ability to restore order, when things got a bit out of hand, as they often do with children's games. He very often helped Joseph with his work, and always responded quickly when Joseph called him.

Jesus was attentive and a very quick learner and this made Joseph's work somewhat easier – knowing that he had a willing apprentice. He had chores to do and did them cheerfully and competently, always making it a fun thing to do and not putting things off. One of his chores was to milk the goat, which sometimes rather resented being milked! There were other chores as well and he often went on messages for Mary, when she had made something for a neighbour who wasn't well.

Prayer, of course, played a large part in the lives of Joseph, Mary and Jesus and this was the pivot on which their lives were balanced and this is what kept them all happy and content – because they knew that God was always with them, watching over them and keeping His hand always upon the family. They were warmed in the palm of His hand.

Jesus particularly loved it when his grandparents came to visit, which they did a couple of times a year. Mostly in the winter months when travel was easier on them. He enjoyed listening to the older people telling tales of long ago. This was always a magical time, usually after the evening meal, when the dishes were done and everyone was replete and warmed by the fire, bathed in the candlelight, just musing over the day's events which often lead to reminiscences. Jesus loved that. It was warm, secure and comfortable and sometimes he dozed a little and Mary had to rouse him and send him off to bed.

I think, though, that most of all this family loved just being together and enjoying each other's company. At the end of the day they would discuss the happenings of that day. Mary was usually occupied with weaving or darning and Joseph worked with his wood. Fashioning furniture, small tables and chairs and the like and Jesus would be working on the making of some small wooden toy. Joseph would be keeping an eye on the progress of his little helper. Perhaps the best time of all though was the companionable silence that enveloped them all in that little home in Nazareth.

There was such a glow of goodness, peace and happiness which surrounded them, and the mutual love and respect which emanated from them was contagious and I'm sure that this is the reason all the neighbours liked to keep in close touch with them. I like to think of them like that, just sitting at the end of the day, each one occupied with their own thoughts and hopes and dreams.

**Christmas is coming soon! As we prepare to celebrate the Birth of Jesus, our Saviour,
let us reflect on what Pope Francis had to say about The Holy Family:**

[Their] life was marked by joy, with Jesus surrounded by the care of Joseph and the maternal affection of Mary.

**Their simple life in Nazareth is an example for families
to become communities of love, reconciliation, and mutual help.**



THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD — NIGHT

The fall of darkness brings a hush with it.
The hustle and bustle of the day recedes.
The lights of the church shine out in welcome.
There's excitement in the air.

Whatever strife still troubles the world,
the birth of Christ promises peace and joy.
In an obscure outpost of the Roman Empire,
at a time when there were no obvious grounds for hope,
a child is born in mysterious, possibly scandalous, circumstances.

A child born of heaven and earth,
of flesh and spirit,
of time and eternity.

A child who would become the light of the world.
A child whose life would end in apparent failure,
only for it to be transformed into a glorious triumph.
A child whose birth prompts us to sing,

*Glory to God in the highest
And on earth, peace to people of good will.*

Quote taken from commentary for Midnight Mass
BREAK OPEN THEWORD, THE BOOK FOR READERS 2024