

St Pat's Matters

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



**ST PATRICK'S
CATHEDRAL**
PARRAMATTA

July 2025 | Issue 122

Signing Off

Founding editor Marian Polizzi 'matters'

My editorial in St Pat's Matters magazine last December announced to readers that that edition, Issue 121, was to be my 'swan song', ending the twenty-eight year stint of overseeing its publication.

It might interest readers to know how this venture came about.

I was part of a small group of parishioners looking for ways to strengthen community awareness and welcome newcomers across the various Mass times. So in 1996 I approached the Dean of the Cathedral, then Fr John Boyle, with the idea of starting a parish magazine inviting people to get involved, by contributing articles relating to their personal faith stories, involvement in ministry, or reporting on parish events and reviewing St Pat's march through history.

To this day I remain grateful to Fr John for giving my proposal the 'green light'. He was the vanguard of all his successors, who allowed St Pat's Matters to continue during their tenures as Cathedral Deans: Fathers Kevin Walsh, Wim Hoekstra, John McSweeney, Bob Bossini and now Fr Robert Riedling. My sincere thanks to them all for their trust and support.

Pestering people

At the 'newsletter's inception in 1996, I took on the roles of gathering content, (advertising in the weekly bulletin and often 'pestering' people as well), organising the publication's layout and overseeing its printing in black and white, initially in the parish office on a Gestetner printer. What a challenge that was! Firstly learning how to operate the 'monster' but then, when I wanted to include photos having to pass each page through the machine twice – firstly to print the text then, with text covered, a second time to print the photos!

But with God's help I persevered!

Blessedly, my dear husband Baldo, feeling sorry for my having to cope with the time-consuming 'double dipping' printing saga on the Gestetner, came to my rescue, purchasing a second-hand, more modern commercial printing machine. It was set up for printing at home. Then, a few years later, we updated to a better second-hand model delivered to a new printing site, our business premises at Harris Park.

Coupled with learning how to operate that Gestetner, was the daunting introduction to preparing the newsletter's content on a computer! A complete novice, I was rescued by June Barrett long time parishioner, and neighbour (now deceased). She graciously allowed me to use her computer, and, helped by another parishioner, I was introduced to the world of Publisher.

What a huge learning curve that was! Often the screen would go blank and we would panic thinking all was lost, but somehow June would save the day, recovering lost content. (Miraculously?) Eventually I purchased my own laptop and with the passage of time my computer skills improved. In 2010 printing returned to the parish office: a joy and relief for me — virtually trouble-free printing on modern equipment. Initially, for several issues the printing was outsourced — firstly to the CEO at the Diocesan Office (then still in Victoria Road) then secondly at a commercial printer company before printing returned in-house.

Another 'great leap forward' at this time was St Pat's Matters bursting into 'glorious' technicolour. (To Mili Lee, galvanizer of many initiatives and innovations in the Parish Office, goes the credit for this. She was also responsible for calculating the cheapest source for printing issues.)

Mili was also responsible for suggesting St Pat's Matters should become a magazine and that the front cover should reflect that 'upgrade'. She and I collaborated, not always in complete agreement, as to the cover's layout and message. A wonderful, often fun-filled experience for me.

Never did I expect that I would still be at the helm 28 years later. But in retrospect the role has been a labour of love, despite the many challenges and unexpected glitches that often caused chaos. A blessing was getting to know so many people through their contributions, and delving into St Patrick's history, to discover the legacy of past priests and parishioners.

Since Fr Robert was away when I finally made my decision to relinquish the role of organising St Pat's Matters, I advised Mili Lee, (in her capacity as Cathedral Manager), of my decision to 'retire'. However, I was truly 'chuffed' when she suggested I remain involved in the magazine's new stage by doing the editorial. After much reflection I decided to decline the invitation. In 2025 St Pat's Matters enters a new phase: a new team takes on the responsibility of sourcing content, planning layout and publication; under their leadership may the new chapter transition smoothly ensuring the magazine continues to document the history, events and life in and beyond our Cathedral Parish.

In 2010, at St Patrick's Cathedral Bishop Kevin Manning, ended his farewell address to Parramatta Diocese thus:

"...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."

I echo Bishop Manning's sentiment: Although saddened that 'my era' has ended, I thank God for the privilege of documenting the parish's 'matters' — even if only for a season.



Marian with assistant, Mili Lee

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven"

Ecclesiastes 3:1



Photo by [Bruno Martins](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Thank You, Marian!

Red Mass

Another New Start to the Legal Year



The tradition of starting the legal year with a Mass in the Cathedral at Parramatta began at St Patrick's in 2019. In honour of the Holy Spirit, the Divine Advocate, red vestments are worn in the celebration which dates from 1245 in Paris.

Again, this year on 3 February there was a strong showing of legal and judicial officers who joined in the mass celebrated by Bishop Vincent. NSW attorney general The Hon Michael Daly, Chief Magistrate of the Local

Court of NSW, His Hon Judge Michael Allen and NSW District Court Her Honour Judge Sophie Beckett took part, along with other members of parliament and various dignitaries, accompanied of course by regular parishioners and choir, and all enjoyed supper after the mass in the Cloister hall.

The Law society of New South Wales along with the St. Thomas More society sponsored the event.

Credit: Catholic Outlook

Lenten Drive

JRS Food Bank

Claire Pospischil reports, grateful for your support

Once again Lent 2025 saw generous Cathedral parishioners and visitors contribute much needed non-perishable food plus laundry products to the Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) food bank donation drive. Five rounds of donation pick-ups occurred through Lent to restock the JRS food pantry.

The JRS food bank on Victoria Rd supports over 150 refugee families and individuals. Prior to Lent the JRS food bank ran out of donated food. With the Lenten donations from the Cathedral, other parishes and schools, the food bank is again well stocked to support those in need. Another collection is planned for August.



Parramatta Mission

A homily that inspired going out in pairs (and more...)



On 14 July 2024 Deacon David Dowling presented a homily on Mark's Gospel: the Lord sending out the Apostles in pairs. Deacon David reflected on the calling of every baptised person to engage in the mission of Christ: 'When ordinary people answer God's call, extraordinary things can happen: it is time to begin'. During the parish announcements Deacon David called the parish to attend an outreach to Parramatta Mission.

On 23rd July, dozens of parishioners prepared and served lunch, distributed clothing and blankets, and engaged with their sisters and brothers in a spirit of hospitality.

Since that day a large number of parishioners have been regular volunteers at Parramatta Mission, working together and serving together.

The group comprises people of all ages. It has no leader, and is an enterprise of equals trying to live their faith through action. It has turned out to also be great fun, with new friendships formed and a lot of laughter.

Since Deacon David's initial call to action, the group has grown considerably over the year, and is now exploring opportunities outside of Parramatta Mission: engaging with the Jesuit Refugee Service, providing hospitality in Prince Alfred Park opposite the Cathedral, supporting the parish's CRISP project and other parish activities currently under development.

While the group is not a formal activity of the parish, it does work under the guidance of the Social Justice Ministry, and communicates through a WhatsApp group. We are always interested in new ideas, and welcome new members.

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To find out more please contact Sebastian: 0425 332 738.
Next edition: The impact on those who serve
.....



"A wonderful thing happens when the members of a community (such as a parish or some other expression of Catholic community) know their gifts and are using them together for the sake of the mission. When this happens, people experience the Holy Spirit more directly and so encounter Jesus more vividly."

Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry: Gifted for the Mission: An Introduction to Charisms #27



First Holy Communion

Two groups of children made their first Holy Communion on successive Sundays in June, the first group on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, followed a week later by the second group on the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul. Beautifully prepared and with great reverence, they received Our Lord present in the Eucharist.

Thus, they completed the second stage of Catholic Christian initiation, having been baptised, and in Confirmation, in a couple of years' time, they will become full members of the Church. May they continue deepening their faith and strengthening their connection to God and Church. Congratulations on this joyous occasion to these children and their families of faith!

Zachariah
Angelique
Archie
Sofia

Jean
Margaret
Elodie
Frank

An Xin
Phoenix
Adam
Audrey

Vivienne
Lincoln
Noah
Arin

Valentina
Margaret
Christiano
Gicellyna

Valerie
Harrison
Matilda

Elise
Kyrie
Dylan
Anyia

Jesse
Aerith
Nairo
Lourdes

Rica
Anthony
Emily
Joseph

Junior
Quinton
Dylan
Scarlett

Aditi
Elsa
Luke
Callum





The Crucifix

Cathedral Art & Architecture Series with Martin Graham

Christ on the cross has been represented in so many ways through the centuries. In our Cathedral the crucifix is massive. Nailed to it is the body of a strong man, alive, with over-sized chest and hands. His arms are open wide to bless and embrace the whole world with an enormous heart. The broken horizontal beam invites us to look more closely at the head of this bearded figure, crowned with thorns, chin slightly raised and looking upwards.

I think this work is consistent with the portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Up high on this cross, Jesus surrenders his life, is glorified and reigns as King. No one takes his life from him; he lays it down of his own accord. His life's purpose is accomplished. The INRI notice (Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum - Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews) announces in multiple languages a universal offer of salvation. The saving blood and water from his pierced heart flow for all who believe.



The indignity of public nakedness is disguised in representations of the crucifixion by a covering. When I first saw this cross and noticed how the end of the cloth is pointing upwards, I wondered if that was because one year it had become snagged on the purple cloak that covers the crucifix during Lent and Holy Week! But then I noticed the processional cross has exactly the same feature in solid metal, so this was no mistake. What should we make of it?

To me the cloth lifts in the wind, suggesting Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit is fulfilled at the moment of our salvation. What looks like the worst possible outcome is just when resurrection life is stirring, fully revealed when death is fully overcome.



Artist Robin Blau constructed the cross of heavy 6mm 316 grade stainless steel plate, with the corpus from similar sheet, rod and plate. The cross itself is 5m high and the corpus 2.4m, much taller than the average man. Enfolded by the curved wooden panels behind, it dominates the space. In the simplicity of the Cathedral there is no escaping the centrality of the cross where Jesus has been "lifted up".

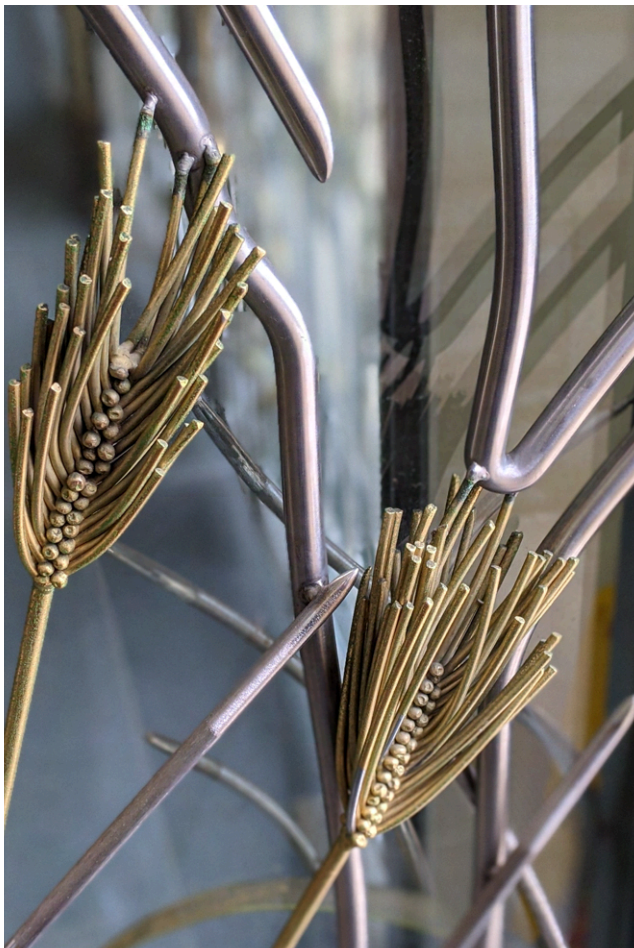
What do we see at the base of this cross? On this unpromising rocky ground there are already ears of wheat. The single grain is already producing its fruit. (We also see wheat sprouting on the entrance doors of the Cathedral).

Reflecting on the sacred heart, Pope Francis writes on its call to us:

"In contemplating the pierced heart of the Lord, we are inspired to be more attentive to the sufferings and needs of others, and confirmed in our efforts to share in his work of liberation as instruments for the spread of his love. As we meditate on Christ's self-offering for the sake of all, we are naturally led to ask why we too should not be ready to give our lives for others." (Dilexit nos, #171).

As biblical scholar Brendan Byrne SJ writes, Our Saviour overcomes the hostile forces that hold us in thrall, but the peace in our hearts is gained at his great cost.

Credits: 1. St. Patrick's Cathedral Parramatta: The Art Programme. 2. Brendan Byrne: Life Abounding, A Reading of John's Gospel.



Spot the difference! Beautiful photos of the Cathedral can be seen on the website of Guida Moseley Brown Architects. Have a look and notice things that have changed since they were taken more than 20 years ago.

<https://www.gmbarchitects.com/projects/st-patricks-cathedral-diocese-of-parramatta/>

Divine Mercy Sunday

The celebration at the Cathedral

Bernadette Ching & Dianne Smith report.



It was such a tremendous blessing when Fr Robert, the Dean of the Cathedral, approved the celebration of the Feast of Divine Mercy at St Patrick's. For years, surrounding parishes in our diocese like Holy Name of Mary in Rydalmere, St Andrews in Marayong, St. Margaret Mary in Merrylands, and others were celebrating this feast day. Parramatta Cathedral, the cradle of our faith, is now part of this celebration.

Sunday 25 May 2025 was a day to remember celebrating the life of Pope Francis, honouring him at the 11am Mass with a throng of Priestly representation from across the diocese led by Bishop Long, where parishioners, local MPs, Councillors and media flocked to honour the beloved Pope.

The Cathedral was busy organising its first Feast of Divine Mercy Sunday celebration. It was well publicised and attracted a considerable number of laity who spent the day honouring the life of Sr Mary Faustina (1905-1938) through whom Jesus instructed this feast be celebrated.

With a small team of dedicated volunteers working behind the scenes, the feast began after a delicious lunch in the Cloister Café feeding Priests and volunteers. There were stalls offering information, rosary beads, prayer cards etc. The Sacrament of Confession was available most of the afternoon (1pm-5 pm), where a lot of people took advantage of our Lord's promise: not only the sin but the punishment will be forgiven. During this time there was the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Solemn Prayer Reflection from the diary of Sr Mary Faustina. There was silent time to be had alone with God.

At 3:00pm there was a beautiful public Eucharistic Procession led by Edward Safadi, thurifer, Deacon David holding the crucifix, while Fr Damon Sypher held up the Eucharist under a canopy supported by four acolytes with candles carried by three acolytes, the faithful following behind and singing the Divine Mercy prayer. The procession was simply beautiful and attracted the public attention, some of whom stopped to record the event on their phones as we passed by singing.

After this, at 4:00pm, there was a Divine Mercy Sunday Holy Mass celebrated by Fr John Goulding. After the Mass, Fr John blessed parishioners, rosary beads, prayer cards and other items offered for blessing. After which we all had dinner in the Cloister Hall where a fabulous feast awaited everyone ready to celebrate the success of a very rewarding and Spirit filled day.

This feedback made me [Bernadette] cry: A Parramatta parishioner drove to Burwood to collect her sister who has Alzheimer's. "My sister suffers from Alzheimer's but still retains childhood memories and wanted to experience the processions she attended as a child in her native country. She absolutely loved every single part of the ceremony and collected all the prayer sheets to take back home with her."

She told us every time she brings her sister out, she would forget what they did that day as soon as they reach home. On Divine Mercy Sunday, her sister was talking about the event the whole night to her husband.

More impressions

It was wonderful to see the Divine Mercy Sunday devotion at the Cathedral this year, especially as the chaplet of Divine Mercy is said every Friday in the chapel after the Cenacle. This annual feast should be the highlight of the conclusion of the Easter Octave every year at the Cathedral. **Véronique**

I attended for the first time without expectations and prayed God will lead the way. Personally, the highlight was my spiritual liberation after receiving the sacrament of reconciliation and I profoundly felt our Lord's merciful love. Father John Goulding's inspirational homily defined the Divine Mercy exceptionally well, in relation to the Jubilee year. Thank you, Lord! **T Pham**

A very special acknowledgement to all the faithful congregation that attended the Divine Mercy event; and for the interest in accepting and sharing Holy cards and Rosaries with loved ones who couldn't attend. Thank you for the amazing fellowship afterwards. **Sandra**

The whole event was one to remember and many of us on the Central Coast will be looking forward to attending next year. I hope that someday in the not too distant future we will be able to conduct our own and bring this special blessed day to the Central Coast for all to experience and be inspired to have our own Divine Mercy Sunday. **Mary Anne Xuereb**

It's a great blessing to be able to pray, reflect and to share fellowship with others during our first Divine Mercy Day at St Patrick's Cathedral. It matters because the meaningful spiritual events including the Divine Mercy Sunday draws us all as God's faithful under our Diocesan Mission. From the time we spent in humble preparation as we enter the sacred space, to the shared prayers and then participating in the procession, this spiritual journey culminating in holy mass was very memorable. We as participants and fellow worshippers felt God's grace and are filled with gratitude. **Lynn Campbell**

I am grateful to the organisers, the volunteers who assisted with food preparation and service, the wardens, and those who led us in The Divine Mercy prayers, reflections, confession, the Procession, and the singers at the Mass, all of which were carried out with great success. Moreover, I am thankful to the priests who participated and made this a truly holy experience for all attendees. God bless you all in your ministry to save souls. **Belinda**

Being a part of the procession was an absolute honour. I felt goosebumps all the way. It was an amazing day full of grace. I want to thank St Patrick's Cathedral and all the organisers for their weeks of planning behind the scenes and for their nonstop efforts into making this day happen. **George K**

Every aspect was deeply reverent, the Procession was the highlight - Jesus leading and guiding us closer to our faith, witnessing our devotion to others. Concluding with Benediction, then finally Confession, I pray there will be another Divine Mercy celebration next year, and I hope I can bring many others. **JB**



Cemetery Goings-on

The Friends of St Patrick's Cemetery held a fund-raising event over the weekend of 28 and 29 June. Father Robert gave permission for us to have a trade table outside each mass for the sale of hand knitted winter goods. Our stock was 42 beanies, 20 scarves, two blankets, four knee rugs and assorted small items such as coat hangers and baby wear.

Thanks to the wonderful generosity of parishioners, we raised \$668.80 (not including the Irish 50c coin and New Zealand \$2 coin we found in the change!) We sold out so quickly there was nothing left to sell for the 6:00pm mass on Sunday.

We had determined before the sale to give donated goods and anything left over to charity. Unfortunately, parishioners were so eager to buy there were only 3 items left by the end of the 11:00am Mass. St Vincent de Paul has received these items. Sincere thanks to all those who bought goods or donated money towards the cemetery fund. Thanks also to those who stood in the cold beside me [Judith Dunn] and persuaded people to buy -Lynn Mahoney, Paul Carson, Phil Russo and Peter Goss.

The funds raised will be put towards works at the cemetery such as repair of memorials, placing a plaque to denote a prominent grave or developing a self-guided tour. Thank you again, we were astonished at the result and will spend the money wisely on your behalf. [Judith hand-knitted all but three of the items for sale! -Ed.]

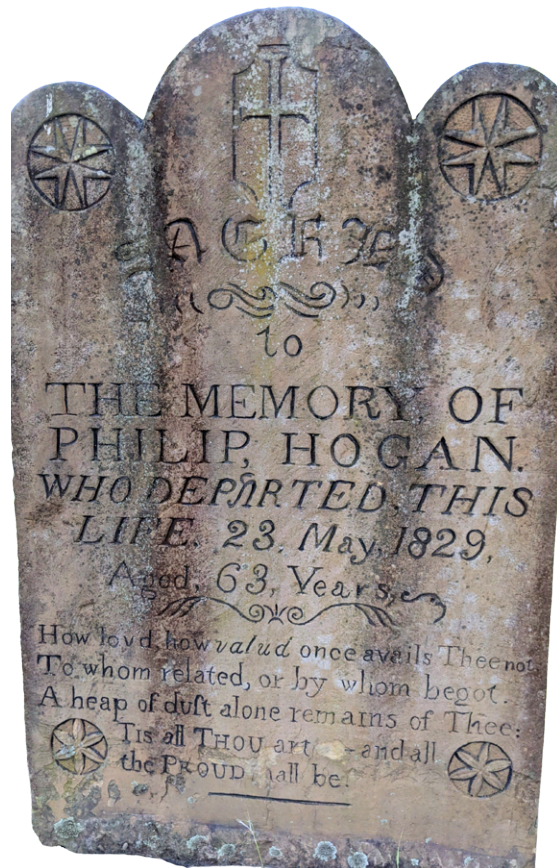
The St Patrick's Cemetery Committee decided to enter a tour of St Patrick's Cemetery in the National Trust Heritage Festival this year.

Six members of the committee attended, but to our disappointment only four people booked in online. The weather had been a bit iffy but we determined our time would not be wasted. Clothing draped over headstones was collected, some weeding completed, the chapel checked and cleaned and a table with knitted goods enticingly laid out for sale. To fulfil our commitment, we decided to go ahead with the tour.

The weather fined up and to our amazement twenty-four people arrived! Tea, coffee and biscuits were served after an enjoyable hour exploring the stories of our Catholic pioneers, from Mayors to those who created mayhem, from Irish convict women to wealthy landholders. Each headstone has a fascinating story behind it that reveals the lifestyle of early Catholics from a surprisingly wide area around Parramatta.

Friends of St Patrick's Cemetery meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm in the cloister rooms. All parishioners welcome to join our group to care for, restore, research and document our rich Catholic history.

*How lovd, how valud once avails Thee not; To whom related,
or by whom begot. A heap of dust remains of thee: Tis all
Thou art and all the Proud shall be.*



Two Lunches in the Park

Mother's Day Inter-Faith Service

On Mother's Day, a group of Hindu families connected with the parish via the London Stock Exchange prepared a lunch in the cloister kitchen and served it with the Pathways group, Baptists who have been working in that space for more than 30 years. In a wonderful example of inter-faith action we saw Hindus, cooking in the Catholic kitchen, serving with Baptists, providing a beautiful lunch for those gathered in the park. A similar effort is planned for Father's Day in September.

Credo Young Adults lunch service

Typically, the Credo Young Adults group gathers once a month and shares a meal, faith and fellowship. However, the most recent gathering was different and unexpectedly transformative for some Credo members.

On Saturday 28th June, the Credo Young Adults Group embarked on doing a lunch service for those in need. Using the parish hall facilities, Credo prepared pea and ham soup, pasta-bake and biscuits and fresh fruit to serve. Credo raised money among the group members to help buy the supplies.

The group started cooking in the morning, motivated and in good spirits. For most of us, this was the first time cooking in such large volumes and handling pots of 40 litres and 5 huge trays of pasta bake. After a joyful and busy morning preparing the meals, Credo brought the meals to Prince Alfred Park where we were fortunate to share the space with the Compassion On Souls group.

The members of Credo showed a natural hospitality. It wasn't just warm meals Credo served, but smiles, laughs and conversation with those queuing in line. For many members in Credo, this experience served as a reminder of how tough some people's circumstances are and how fortunate we are to have a warm meal and a warm bed to sleep in.

The lunch service was a huge success as over 65 people were served, with some even coming back for second servings (a testament to Credo's culinary skills as all meals were made with love). The simple act of serving hot meals left such a profound impact on all of us.

We hope that this lunch service wasn't a one-off act, but rather like planting a seed. It should challenge us to ask: how often can we serve those in need? How can we show Christ to others?

We remain hopeful that this is the first of many food services to come.

Report by Ola from Credo



Easter at the Cathedral

The bonfire was lit. The glow of the fire attracted the gaze of those who walked by. There was no mistaking this was the culmination of the Triduum, The Easter Vigil.

For many of us who look forward to greeting the dawn of the Resurrection of Christ, Easter Vigil holds a special place in our Lenten journey. For 12 men and women this year it marks a very special milestone in their journey with Christ. It is at this year's Easter Vigil that they were reborn in Christ as they acknowledged Him as their Lord and Saviour, through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation which they received. It is here that before our congregation at St Patrick's Parramatta, they professed their desire to be part of the Catholic and universal church.

We give thanks to God for blessing our community with these men and women. Participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults over several months they have allowed themselves to be curious enough to see, listen and experience the grace of God through this ministry. Their sponsors too have taken this journey with them and provided practical and spiritual support.

We thank the RCIA team, led by John and Dianne Starkey, for their dedication and care for this ministry in our parish. We also thank the church decorators and office staff for their behind-the-scenes work.

Baptism, Confirmation &
Eucharist

Rebecca Chow
Amanda Donsasurith
Kathleen Hunt
Sarah Khoshnow
Candy Khoshnow
Karez Khoshnow
Jenna Molesworth
Binod Nepali
Cassandra Phoon
Shirlee Simmons
Max York
Molly Yu

Confirmation & Eucharist

Jack Craythorn
Thomas Do
Aden Romero
Maneerat (Victoria)
Sangsuwan
Stefani Sinanto



Open Arms of St Patrick's

Dianne Starkey from the Social Justice ministry introduces an exciting new outreach

The parishioners of St Patrick's Parish at Parramatta have been very generous and supportive of the St Patrick's Social Justice ministry initiatives to reach out to refugees. The biannual food drives in the past few years have benefited from this generosity, offering wonderful practical support to the Jesuit Refugee Service's food bank. In 2024 the parish hosted a community lunch for refugees during which parishioners welcomed a number of refugee families and shared lunch with them. It was a great day and it could not have happened without the funds raised by parishioners at the Trivia Night.

As an extension of this support of the parishioners of St Patrick's Parramatta for refugees, we are excited to announce that this year the parish will be offering support to a refugee family arriving in Australia. This will be through the Community Refugee Integration and Support Programme (CRISP), an initiative in which a group (such as the parish of St Patrick's) can sponsor a refugee family to come to Australia and offer them practical and financial support for 12 months as they settle in Australia. The programme is designed to offer an atmosphere of warm welcome and provides an "extended family" experience for the refugee family. Research has shown that this community support of refugee families helps them to feel at home, to learn English and to feel that they are an integral part of our Australian community more quickly and effectively.

The CRISP programme asks for a core group of at least five adults to co-ordinate the support for the family. You may have seen an invitation for interested people to contact the office in our parish newsletter in March this year. We now have the core group established and have started the complex process of applications and training that are required by the CRISP organisation. So that it continues to be a parish project we will also be seeking support from parishioners and others along the way, so keep an eye out for more information in the parish bulletin.

Jesus was always welcoming of people from all nations and from all walks of life. He is often depicted with his arms open to accept all of God's earthly children. As parishioners of St Patrick's, we have demonstrated our capacity to be welcoming and to open our arms to all who wish to visit. In keeping with this idea of welcome, we have called our core group "Open Arms of St Patrick's Parish".

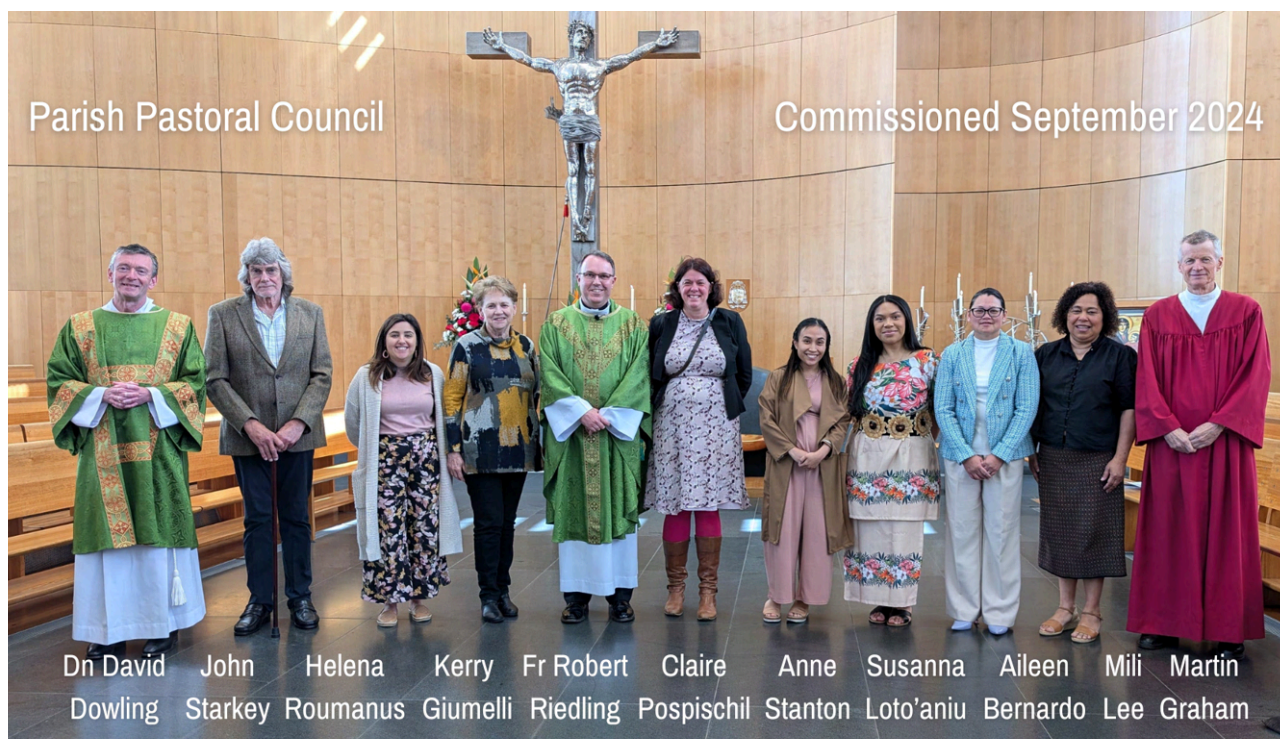
"Hospitality is not just a matter of generosity; it is a moral duty"

Pope Francis

There are five of us who will take on the co-ordinating role for our parish in setting up our CRISP group, but we need your help. The success of this program in Parramatta will depend on your support for fundraising events and requests for donated goods to furnish the home provided to the family. We ask that you continue to pray for us as we journey with the family over the coming year, but most of all we pray that you will be welcoming of the family and make them feel that they have come to a safe and loving community.

Dianne Starkey (Group co-ordinator, 0408 161 443), Sebastian Villafarna (Deputy Co-ordinator), Angela Hansford, Macnos Mutano and Malcolm Freame.

Parish Pastoral Council



As you read this, over a year has passed since the first meetings of the re-established parish pastoral council. We were formally commissioned in September 2024 at the 11:00am mass.

What was our commission? We have articulated it in a statement of **Vision and Mission** and referred to it repeatedly to keep on course at our monthly meetings.

We drew on the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, calling us be a church which is inclusive and welcoming, humble and healing, listening, renewed in spirit and prayer, reaching to the margins, and walking together.

You might find it worthwhile to ask of the parish (and yourself): are we becoming more like that vision?

Discernment in a group like the PPC means coming together with open hearts and minds to seek God's wisdom and weigh up courses of action that once again bring the Good News into the Parramatta context.

We were blessed to have a one-day retreat at Baulkham Hills with Sister Patty Andrew in March. She led us through a series of reflections on discernment of spirits. We wanted to hear God's 'still small voice' (1 Kings 19:12) so we could make good decisions to stimulate growth in discipleship.

Initially in the monthly meetings we looked at the various parish ministries and mapped what gaps there were in how the parish lives out its mission.

After consideration, we decided to focus our energies at this stage on the existing parish ministries, so we liaised with ministry leaders to see what they needed to make their work more effective.

A pilot version of the Alpha experience was successful in the lead-up to Easter and now a public offering has been well supported. Several PPC members were strong believers in Alpha based on their previous experience.

The social justice group is very active and growing with new people joining in. There are multiple opportunities here for you to dip your toe in the water with great support from fellow parishioners.

The last meeting attended by Mili Lee in her ex-officio role as parish manager was in April and the council passed a formal vote of thanks to recognise Mili's contribution since the PPC was re-established in mid-2024. We are grateful for her vision and practical support and wish her many blessings.

We then reviewed the long list of jobs required of the new person to be employed in our parish office in a revised role.

What's next? Please consider what is stirring in your own heart as you grow in faith. How can that be explored or expressed in our parish? Don't hesitate to let us know in person or at ppc@stpatscathedral.com.au.



Vision Statement

"Centred on the Eucharist and guided by the Holy Spirit, St. Patrick's Cathedral Parish uplifts every heart through prayer, formation, and compassionate outreach to become catalysts for transformation. Having been commissioned by Jesus, we form disciples to spread Christ's love and foster a more just and united Church and world."

Mission Statement

As a vibrant and welcoming community, St. Patrick's Cathedral Parish is committed to:

Nurturing spiritual growth: Supporting every member's spiritual journey, fostering a deeper relationship with Christ through prayer, formation, and community.

Inclusive pastoral care: Creating a relational church grounded in Christ's love and care where all are heard, valued, and supported.

Community and synodality: Fostering a culture of dialogue, collaboration, discernment, and shared decision-making as we walk together in faith.

Empowering missionary disciples: Forming and encouraging every individual to be the leaven of God's reign, spreading Christ's love through encounter and witness.

Justice and outreach: Bringing the Gospel to bear on societal issues, advocating for the marginalised, and reaching out to the vulnerable.

Evangelising through civic and religious culture: Engaging the broader community through arts, events, interfaith and ecumenical activities.

The Spirit moves at Pentecost

The day before Pentecost Sunday a group gathered in the Cloister Hall for a short retreat. Some of those attending tell us their experience.

There was always a reason not to attend each time I was invited, but this time, I opened my heart to this invitation, and I know the Holy Spirit has something to do with this.

I like how I learnt the actual meaning of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and reflected on what they're truly for, so I could pray for what I desire from God. I also like the serenity and peacefulness of this retreat, where I can spend a couple of hours with the Lord and not have to rush.

One big takeaway was that we all have gifts from God, but we need to ask God for Grace to fulfil them in our lives.

Rachelle Barroga
(Carnes Hill Parishioner)

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The experience of this retreat replenished my faith, inspired and strengthened my spiritual journey. It encouraged me to enrol in the Alpha program starting in June. I look forward to further enriching my spiritual journey through this program.

Stan Lobo

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This was my chance to step away from daily distractions and immerse myself in prayer, reflection and learning and find ways to welcome the Holy Spirit in my everyday life.

An unexpected yet transformative realisation I made during the retreat was how deeply the gift of piety is connected to love – true, holy and selfless love. Fr Bartunek's explanation helped me to understand that piety isn't just about reverence towards God; it also shapes how we love others, allowing us to see them through God's eyes, without hesitation or fear.

For a long time, I struggled with expressing love freely towards others (outside my family), out of concern that my gestures of kindness or deep care might be misinterpreted as romantic affection, rather than genuine spiritual love. I have now started taking small steps to acknowledge and honour the people around me here at St Pat's and elsewhere, to show them respect and appreciation. This is part of my vow to be more intentional about expressing authentic, Christ-centred love without hesitation.

Marian Cabrera

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As the day unfolded, I became increasingly aware of how vital it is to seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in aligning our lives with God's will.

Moved by the experience, I have since begun each morning by offering seven "Glory Be" prayers to the Holy Spirit, humbly asking for wisdom, strength, and inspiration.

As the day came to a close, I felt deeply grateful for the time spent in prayer, reflection, and fellowship. The Holy Spirit moved quietly among us, stirring hearts and renewing purpose. It reminded me that our faith isn't just something we carry — it's something that carries us, especially when we gather as a community to learn, grow, and lean into God's grace together.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Annette Hartman, Marietta Guillemma, and Michael Guillemma for their exceptional contributions in making this Retreat such a profoundly enjoyable and spiritual experience.

Belinda Bugo

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Matters of Note

Pope Francis, Pope Leo

On Easter Sunday a weakened Pope Francis gave his last blessing to the city of Rome and the world (Urbi et Orbi), then drove around St Peter's square in the Popemobile one last time. The next morning, he was gone. In our Cathedral, Francis was remembered with gratitude in masses on the Second Sunday of Easter. As one journalist encapsulated it, his simple funeral rites reflected the ministry of "a shepherd taken home."



Photo by Ashwin Vaswani on Unsplash

"Bob's the Pope!"

With these words Tim Cleary announced the news to his wife with great excitement. Tim is a former principal of St Augustine's College, Brookvale, and had met Fr Robert Prevost on many occasions, Pope Leo was an Augustinian and visited Australia often in his leadership role. In our diocese the Holy Spirit parish, St Clair-Erskine Park, is under the care of the Augustinians who surely have a special connection to him. We continue to pray that Pope Francis, in God's mercy, now enjoys the fullest joy of the Gospel in heaven, and for Pope Leo as he begins his ministry of peace and unity.

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We acknowledge the Burramattagal people of the Dharug Nation, the traditional custodians of this area, and honour the spiritual and cultural wisdom of the First Peoples — wisdom grounded in care for Country, reverence for story, and a sacred connection to creation. We pay respects to Elders past and present. May we walk gently together, in justice, healing, and shared hope.

Editorial team

The new team has very big shoes to fill following Marian Polizzi's sterling work of 28 years. We hope our first effort meets your approval. You can help us by sharing your stories of Cathedral parish life, and taking photos of events you participate in. Send contributions to stpatismatters@stpatscathedral.com.au.

Martin Graham, Aileen Bernardo, Caitlin Bernardo



St Patrick's Day

Parish celebrations on Sunday 16 March included barbecues, a jumping castle, Irish dancing, and a fundraising bazaar with books, plants and more.



Another Farewell

Former Parish Manager Mili Lee 'matters' too

A celebration and farewell for Mili was held in the Cloister Hall on Thursday 24 April, before she finished her service at the end of the month. Fr Robert spoke, Kerry Giumelli from the Parish Pastoral Council and Debbie Grigson from the Parish Finance Committee paid tribute, and the large attendance of parishioners, friends and family were in full support. A wonderful meal was produced by volunteers, Aaron Bugo provided music and technical help, and a slideshow presented a sample of all that has happened over the past 16 years of service to the parish.

Mili replied at length — there was a lot to cover! After an Acknowledgment of Country, she continued:

A Journey Marked by Providence

In August 1995, Watson and I - newly arrived from Fiji, holding the hands of our two small children - walked into the 8:00am Mass at what is now the Chapel. We were welcomed with warmth and genuine care by Silvan and Michael Rechichi, Ross McNally, and Fr John Boyle. It was more than a greeting - it was the moment we found home.

In 1996, we welcomed our son Ethan Patrick, his middle name a tribute to this Cathedral. That same year, the church burned down, and Ethan was baptised in the parish hall. Also that year, both Watson and I stepped into ministry, he as a reader, and I as a cantor.

Over a decade later, a simple parish stewardship meeting led to my first deep involvement - co-organising a Spring Fair with Cathy Dearie. My visits to the parish office became more frequent, and soon, the position of parish secretary opened up. After the appointed candidate resigned a week into the job, Fr Wim (Hoekstra), preparing to leave for Scotland, asked if I could "hold the fort."

He returned from Scotland and offered me a three-day-a-week role. And that was the beginning of what became sixteen years of service.

This is not a career path — it is a story of God's providence. Time and again, God opened doors I didn't even know existed. What I brought was small, but what I received was abundant.

Reflections and Blessings – A New Season

Managing the Cathedral has always been a balancing act — a sacred tension. It's the balance between serving as the parish church of the people of Parramatta, and holding the identity of the mother church of the Diocese. It's a space where the deeply personal and the deeply public meet. It's a place where we welcome the individual in quiet prayer — and the whole Diocese in grand celebration.

This balance has shaped me. It has stretched me. And sometimes, it has even wounded me. But in all of it, I have seen the hand of God.

Last year, during a retreat at Jamberoo Abbey, I walked the path to the Chapel in autumn. Fallen leaves were gathered at the base of a tree, almost as if gently placed there. Later, in the silence of prayer, I realised: sometimes our autumns — our letting go — become the compost for spring. God uses even our falling apart to grow something beautiful. And now I stand here, ready to step into a new season of ministry.

My heart is heavy. My eyes are tired with tears, especially in these final days as I draw closer to saying goodbye. But when I look back to that August morning in 1995 - when my family first walked into the 8am Mass at the old church, uncertain and hopeful — I see the abundance of grace that has followed.

Since that day, my blessings have multiplied. My community has multiplied. My faith has deepened. And my family has grown up inside these walls.

Tensions and all, working for God is the most beautiful burden — and the greatest privilege — of my life. Parish ministry is not just about systems and sacraments. It's about hearts. People. Community. The ordinary moments when Christ shows up at the door, in a conversation, in a kind gesture, or a lit candle in the dark.

My life is immeasurably richer because I have been here. I came with very little to offer, and I walk away carrying a blessing too large to measure. And so, to all of you, thank you: for allowing me to serve, to fail, to grow, to weep, and to rejoice among you.

May the Cathedral always remain a place where saints are formed quietly, and the Spirit of God is welcomed joyfully.

Mili served with three bishops, six Deans, 12 priests and several deacons, along with parish Pastoral Councils and Finance Committees, leaders of parish ministries, parish and Diocesan staff, and so many parishioners who volunteered for so many events. She also thanked her children Olivia, Chris, Ethan, and Gen who grew up with the Cathedral and stepped in as youth leaders, bulletin contributors, BBQers, decorators, cleaners and even as Santa Claus!

But she neglected to mention her role in so much that has happened: she established the Gift Shop and the Seniors Ministry, introduced the Parish App and the Volunteers Dinner, helped re-start the Red Mass, initiated the Business Breakfast and Light Up St Pats, supported bringing Alpha to the parish, organised church decorations and fundraising barbecues (even down to buying the sausages), catered for innumerable events, liaised with City Council, police, stadium, homeless services and more! A massive contribution!

Mili's new role is at the Mary MacKillop Spirituality Centre, Norwest, where she is Centre Host.



Fr Robert Riedling, Dean, wrote in the parish bulletin on 4 May:

Dear Mili, The parishioners of St Patrick's Cathedral Parish wish to thank you sincerely for your many years of selfless, sacrificial Christian service in your various roles in the parish since 2009, most lately as Parish Manager.

It is clear to us all that for you, your service here is not a job, but a true vocation and one which is lived from a heart aligned with that of Christ.

Your love and passion for people and for your faith is evident in all that you do. There is never anything which is too much trouble for you and all who have contact with you speak highly of you. Many of the ministries that animate the Cathedral parish exist because they have been your brainchild or because you ensure they are nourished and promoted adequately.

We all wish you the greatest of satisfaction and success in your new role, one which will benefit greatly from your talents, dedication, passion and faith. May God continue to bless you abundantly and, through you, may others continue to be blessed.



