

MARIAN

Magazine of

*St. Francis Xavier, Montmorency, and
Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham*

December 2019



*The only way to keep the light
of the new born Christ
Is to share it*

On behalf of Father Michael, Father Terry and Father Barry
we wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

A word from Father Michael.

Dear Parishioners and Friends of Eltham and Montmorency,

I have been asked to welcome you to this Eltham Marian Magazine and thank you for your contribution to this edition.

It has been your tradition to produce a local paper - a few times a year, and this enables the members of the local community to share and communicate 'stories', poems and ideas. I truly believe that great communication at so many levels helps to build a strong faith community.

This production is offered to you as we move into 2020.

So, firstly - thank you for your welcome to me over the past 7 months. The Catholic communities of Eltham & Montmorency have been very open to my presence and pastoral ministry among you as I settle in. Changes are never easy but necessary for any growth and unfortunately a real given in daily life.

Secondly, I look forward to working together with these communities over the next year as we transition into a 'new parish' with 2 vibrant communities. 2020 - sounds like an amazing date, and I am confident it will be a huge year in the life of this parish.

On behalf of the parish team: Ana, Beth, Gina & Kate, Terry Barry and myself, I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Warmest Love,

Michael



I'll be honest. I was on the verge of not producing this year's Marian. I simply didn't have the articles. But then all of a sudden they came flowing in. My special thanks to Kate at the office for not only urging me to continue but also to help so much. I am convinced that all readers will be amazed by the variety of stories from parishioners.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

J.S.

PERSPECTIVE

It was Saturday morning 7:am and I was up. I didn't have breakfast because I was going to mass and at that time one didn't eat before Holy Communion. It was a first Saturday of the month, where we were told that we would go straight to Heaven if we attended all five Saturdays. I had been serving the Mass for over a year now. I was nine and had learned to give the responses in Latin. We had learned it by rote just like a piece of poetry, we hadn't a clue what we were saying but I think we had a semblance of correct inflection and sincerity.

Our Parish church was in Rayleigh Just north of the Thames and about one and a half miles from Thundersley where I lived. I set off through the common along a wooded track where the canopy of trees met to form an enchanting green tunnel. I crossed the arterial road to London, then through the kissing gates and over the style to the gravel track fenced off from the paddocks until I came to the main road and London Hill where our church was located.

Father Hemmings was already robed, you didn't speak to the priest when he was reading his breviary, so I quickly put on my cassock, picked up my missal and followed him up to the Altar. We both kneel, Father makes the sign of the cross : " In nomine Patris * et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, Amen. (P) Introibo ad altare Dei - I will go in unto the altar of God.

(S) Ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam.- Unto God who giveth joy to my youth.

I still remember those opening verses in Latin and I still remember the Joy I felt when giving the responses with confidence. We altar boys also had a lot of fun learning the Latin.

On one occasion when we came to that part in the Confiteor ' mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa ' one wag said " make me a cowboy , make me a cowboy, make me a Mexican cowboy!! "

There was only a handful of parishioners at mass , mostly women and I was happy to see my Godmother there. She was actually the presbytery housekeeper at the time of my Baptism and happily filled in as there was no one else available. After Mass I expectantly went to say hello, as she usually gave me sixpence. On this occasion she rummaged through her purse and came up with Half a Crown, 'there' she said in her Irish brogue ' It was your birthday last week wasn't it' . Blown away by her generosity and a little embarrassed I thanked her and gave her a peck on the cheek. Then clutching the large coin in my pocket, I ran all the way up London Hill to the town square. The big red double deck bus had not yet arrived so I had a chance to catch my breath. I wondered what I could spend some of my money on, the smell of the cake shop was inviting but I wanted to take my prize home to show mum.

There was a scruffy old bloke on the seat at the bus stop. The kids called him Mr stinky and avoided him as he smelt to high heaven and tried to entice us with a grubby packet of sweets. I took my usual seat on the top deck at the back of the bus and looked out of the window. The town square was a terminating stop for buses, so they usually waited about five minutes before taking off. As the bus started I heard someone jump on late. He came up the stairs puffing, it was a young lad about my age.

'ello' he said in his slightly cockney accent, 'Ow ya goin mate' . He was a scruffy little bloke with what I thought was snot bubbling out of one nostril but he was smiling happily and obviously please he had caught the bus. I was immediately taken back by the look of him and his forward attitude. 'are you goin to the speedway ? I am' he enthused. I knew of the speedway because my brothers loved it. 'No , I said 'I'm going home. 'Av ya got any money? He asked. 'No, I lied clutching my half Crown in my pocket. 'Come on mate, ya must av somink, I only need tuppence to get some chips'.

'I've only got a penny for the fair ' I lied again. 'Oh yeah I know you toffs, you've probably got half a Crown in your pocket' He insisted looking me in the eye and smiling cheekily. I was completely thrown by his insightfulness and not a little intimidated. Thankfully I was saved by the conductor asking for fairs. I gave him my penny and he issued a ticket. ' Fair please he said to the young bloke. 'I aint got no money ' said the boy . ' Then you'll have to get off the bus'. The conductor indicated with his thumb and moved away. ' I'm only going one more stop anyway' the kid winked at me. With that he raced down the stairs and jumped off as the bus came to a stop. I looked out the window to see the young bloke looking up at me, smiling and waving. I wasn't ready for what I saw on that Saturday morning in 1949, and I wasn't ready for the affect it would have on me for the rest of my life. His little face was radiant and his beautiful eyes were smiling at me. The young lad was still there but his face had been transfigured to the face of a young Jesus. The bus moved on, I was devastated, I would have jumped off the bus if I could but I was too late. I stared out the back window but I couldn't see him. On reflection I realised I had been given a lesson for life, one about selfishness and lies and above all about prejudice and fear. From what perspective do we see others? And what would they look like if we replaced their face with the face of Jesus.



James Percy 2019

Amongst my late husband's (Tom Way – St Francis Xavier's parish) papers, I discovered this poem on Monsignor Hoyne who was PP at St John's, Heidelberg, in the early 1900's. He rode on horseback to the Yarra Valley to offer Mass at various locations. My mother-in-law was part of the Hoyne family, originally from Sale, Victoria. After leaving Heidelberg, Monsignor Hoyne went to Hobart where he died in 1912. There is reference to him on the internet.

Marea Way

THE DEAD PRIEST - MONSIGNOR HOYNE

*A shadow slept folded in vestments,
The dream of a smile on its face
Dim, soft as the gleam after sunset,
that hangs like a halo of grace.
Where the daylight hath died in the valley,
and the twilight hath taken its place -
A shadow! but still on the mortal
there rested the tremulous trace,
Of the joy of a spirit immortal
passed up to its God in his grace -
A shadow hast seen in the summer
a cloud wear the smile of the sun,
On the shadow of death there is flashing
the glory of noble deeds done.
On the face of the dead there is glowing
the light of the holy race run,
And the smile of the face is reflecting
the gleam of the crown he has won.
Still, shadow, sleep on in the vestments,
unstained by the priest who has gone.*

The Murray family of Research.

Over the past several years since leaving the Parish, John Stuyfbergen has asked me to put pen to paper and document our time at Research / Eltham in Our Lady's Parish. It started in 1964 with Barbara & I looking to come out a bit further from our Templestowe & Abbotsford family locations so we could have some chooks and fruit trees. After initially looking around Wattle Glen, we finally settled on Lot 75 in Reynolds Road, Research.

My building plans were approved by Eltham Council and I spent the Christmas holidays bricking up a retaining wall & flower boxes on the excavation that had been taken out. By Christmas 1965 we had married at St John's Clifton Hill, had the base bricked up and framing all up with the assistance of two uncles who were builders. The next twelve months saw the roof on, brickwork up and windows all in to lock the place up.

1967 & 1968 saw the internals done with flooring, plaster and all the inbuilt cupboards for kitchen, laundry, bathroom and bedrooms in place. We were now ready for the big day to move in during October with Michelle approaching two and Tony just a month old.





We soon became involved with Father Cameron and other local families as we celebrated mass each Sunday in the old Research Hall. Having spent the years working on the house, nothing had been done to the acre property and thus the council contractor arrived once again in December to slash the long grass. This action coupled with the Blessing of the House on 2 January 1969 by Fr Cameron surely saved our bacon when the 8th January fire came through from Diamond Creek. Fortunately I was on annual holidays from work at Yarra Falls and able to save our place while some 60 others were lost in the Research, North Warrandyte and Kangaroo Ground areas on the day. This close shave in 1969 resulted in a whole new 40 year CFA involvement through the Research brigade, then at the Lower Yarra Group headquarters up at Kangaroo Ground and even having the base radio in our home for many years.

As Michelle, Tony and then Damien went through Research kinder, they followed on to undertake their schooling down at Our Lady's as well as attending church there once Fr Jenkins had closed off celebrating mass up in the Research Hall. One of the early highlights down at Eltham was Michelle's First Communion that was held in company with all her school mates on 16 March 1975 in the Church at the time that now serves as the Parish Hall.

I wonder how many of those other children in the photograph can be identified and what they are doing with their lives today ???

Obviously as the years rolled by, all three progressed through the various Sacraments just as I had moved on from the Textile industry to manufacture spinning & weaving handcraft equipment in our home workshop. With the children all at school, Barbara had also gone back to part time office work. Tuck shop duties and teaching cooking electives were also fitted in along the way. When Michelle couldn't get into the Brownies at Eltham, Barbara started the Research Pack that subsequently expanded when the girls needed to move up and become Guides. She then formed the Research District and became the first District Commissioner. In this position, she also helped to form a Brownie Pack at Kangaroo Ground.



Late in 1978 I had virtually closed our business and taken the position of Fire Prevention Officer with the Shire of Eltham. After losing 2 lives and some 170 houses in the 1962 fires that burnt out about half of the Shire area, Council had become more concerned about the housing development and fire risk in the area. Time passed by with Michelle and a number of her school mates moving over to CLC for secondary and the two boys eventually and fortunately attending Diamond Creek Technical School where they learnt how to work with their hands.

I recall being on the Parish Council for a couple of years and being pushed by Barbara one night that I was going to be late to the annual election meeting. After apologising for being late and settling in, I asked who the new Chairman was. They all looked at me and said "you are". This continued when I arrived home and Barbara asked who the Chairman was?? I said "you are looking at him". It was from this position with Lyn Smith as my Secretary that I was very honoured to be able to go over and meet Father Barry and then bring him into the Parish as our new Priest.

Later years saw involvement with the Thanksgiving Committee where we ran several programs ourselves to save on the costs of having the Diocesan people come in to do it. We were also involved from the establishment of the Malawi Support Group in 1996 when we established links with our sister parish of St Kizito's in Africa. This has been a very happy time as we worked with other members to raise funds to send over directly into the parish account and see the benefits of this support being put on the ground by Fr Frank Taylor. Barbara also looked after the morning tea rosters for many years and we see that some of her notices are still showing in the kitchen.

The photographs below show the subsequent development from the 1975 First Communion church to the next one that was taken in December 1996 and then the latest home of Our Lady Help of Christians in Eltham taken on 17th February, 2007.



We were honoured when the Parish held a morning tea on 24 June 2012 to farewell us as we packed to make the move from Research up to St Thomas' Village, Greensborough North right alongside the Church. To date we have maintained our Malawi Group involvement where I have held the Treasurers position for many years and still keep in touch with Parish affairs being on the circulation list for the weekly Bulletin.

Barbara & Bernie Murray. November 2019.

REFUGEE/ASYLUM SEEKER UPDATE – and MAUREEN NEWS

Dear Family in Faith.

My apologies for this belated update on the situation with Maureen and her children. The Australian politics of reunification of refugees (but in particular Asylum Seekers) is messy at best, and inhumane at its worst. The politics of PNG defies definition. It is corrupt, patriarchal and more often criminal than just.

So to divulge any information has been fraught with concerns for all of Maureen's family, and for her ongoing application for a permanent visa.

Before I tell you our current news, I will clarify some terminology. A “refugee” is a person seeking asylum due to persecution, war etc. They have come to Australia legally, usually by plane, and before departing their homeland (or country of refuge), have been granted a visa to remain in Australia. An “asylum seeker” is someone who has fled their homeland in fear of their lives and come to Australia *without* a visa to remain. They may have come on a tourist or student visa and then sought asylum when they got to Australia. Or they have come illegally by boat.



Over the last 10 years the Australian Government has shown little compassion toward people seeking a safe new home, regardless of their VISA status. But those in the category of “asylum seeker” are particularly disadvantaged. There are 5 categories of Bridging Visas (which is the visa issued to asylum seekers who are not put into detention.) Each category gives different rights. Most can work legally, but some cannot. They have no rights to Centrelink, and the only funding that was available (the SSRS fund administered by Red Cross or AMES) has now been closed down by the government. Asylum seekers are issued a medicare card, but unlike refugees, they have no health benefits. This impacts on the asylum seekers who come with illnesses that require expensive medication because without the support of church groups, Cabrini and the like, they would not be able to afford this. It also limits access to psychological support which many asylum seekers need (due to Post Trauma Distress Syndrome). Unlike refugees, asylum seekers are not given subsidised MIKI cards, so travel is expensive (if not prohibitive). Unlike refugees, asylum seekers cannot study UNLESS they pay international student fees.

The most inhumane differences in the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers comes with government policies toward citizenship and family reunification. Refugees with permanent residence visas can apply to be reunified with family members left behind. This is even before they have acquired Australian Citizenship. But for the past 10 years VERY FEW applications have been successful. An asylum seeker CANNOT apply for reunification. Asylum seekers who came to Australia by boat, and got their permanent residence visa in the past, are now triaged to the bottom of the list in their applications for citizenship and family reunification. And so it goes on.

In our Parish, we have most recently helped Alida and her sons, Maureen (who lived with Colin and Michelle Leahy), Abrham (who lives with Neil and Lyn Smith), Javid and Tamrat (who live with

Marlis and myself), and Claire and Benhee (who live at the village and are supported by our chapter of St Vincent de Paul and Vincent Care). All these people have benefitted from the generosity of our Parish and the tireless “unsung” outreach by our Vinnies volunteers. Of these, 5 are desperate to be reunited with family (wives and/or children).

So now to Maureen.

To remind you, Maureen almost died at the hands of a violent husband and corrupt police before being brought to Australia by a cousin to attend a family wedding. Whilst here, she sought asylum. Maureen was separated from her 4 children, whom she had left in the care of her aging parents in a mountain village near Mt Hagen. Her husband went to the village, beat up Maureen’s father, burnt down the hut and took the children to his family village and left them in the care of his aging parents. He then went to live in Port Moresby and failed to support the children.

The eldest son Ricky has learning challenges due to some brain damage he sustained from the constant beatings his father gave him around his head. Although 17 years of age, Ricky is repeating year 4 in the village school in 2020. Quenten is 15 years of age and by all accounts intelligent and determined. She has been the glue to hold the family together in her mother’s absence. But already she has warded off two attempts by men to abduct her as she travels by bus to school each day. I don’t need to tell you what happens to these girls, but the “trade” is rampant, unpoliced and unconscionable. To be safe Quenten MUST move to a Catholic boarding school where she will live safely in a dormitory in a protected school compound. Shantel is 13 years old and has Downs Syndrome. To get to the only available special school she catches a bus and is escorted by her younger brother. But even in his care, she narrowly missed death when she walked in front of a car when alighting the bus. So now Shantel remains in the village with no schooling. Emelton is 10 years old and will advance to year 3 in 2020. He is protected as a boy and attends a catholic primary school in Mt Hagen.

In order to secure work, we relocated Maureen to Hamilton where Marlis has family, and where we visit regularly. Through the Anglican and Catholic churches there, we found Maureen a family to live with. This family are key members of the Refugee and Asylum Seeker support group in Hamilton.

Initially our BIG DREAM was to get the children out of PNG, primarily because of the extreme danger to Quenten, but also because the father kept returning to the village and abusing the children. We consulted many experts, not the least of which the Brigidine Sisters. We have worked closely with Sister Brigit and Libby Saunders over the years and their prognosis for getting the children here was grim. Their fear was that with current government policies, the children would languish with no rights and no support, for up to 3 years, and then the most likely outcome would be that they AND Maureen would be deported to PNG.



We then pursued the idea of trying to reunite Maureen with her children in PNG, using the funds we

had gathered to relocate them in a different part of PNG. But as Maureen says, the only way for a single mum to survive is to be amongst her own support group in her own village, and her husband would find her no matter where she was. This dream was untenable.

So we hatched Plan B, the BIGGEST DREAM. We made contact with the Sisters of Mercy in Sydney who have a very active chapter of nuns working in PNG. The head nun (Sister Anne) travels regularly to and from PNG, and knows trustworthy people to work with. Both Our Lady Help of Christian Eltham and the Hamilton group raised money to go toward air fares. But this money will now be diverted in the following way.

1. Ricky will remain at the village school in 2020 and his fees will be funded.
2. Shantel will return to the special school in 2020 with her fees will be funded. A village person will be hired to travel on the bus with her (in both directions) and all the bus fares will be funded.
3. Quenten will move to a Catholic Boarding School in Mt Hagen in 2020, and her fees funded.
4. Emelton will remain at a catholic primary school in 2020 and his fees and bus fares will be funded.

Sister Anne has recently made her first trip to Mt Hagen to start the process of putting this plan in place for 2020. The negotiating with Sister Anne is now done by the president of the Hamilton Refugee Group and I am awaiting follow up news. When the time comes to make payments, Sister Anne will take the money in person to a trusted nun in Mt Hagen, who will then pay the schools directly.

Our hope with this plan is that we can keep the children safe and educated while Maureen builds a life for herself here in Australia. Then, WHEN she receives her permanent resident visa, and her citizenship, she dreams of sponsoring the children herself, to come to Australia.

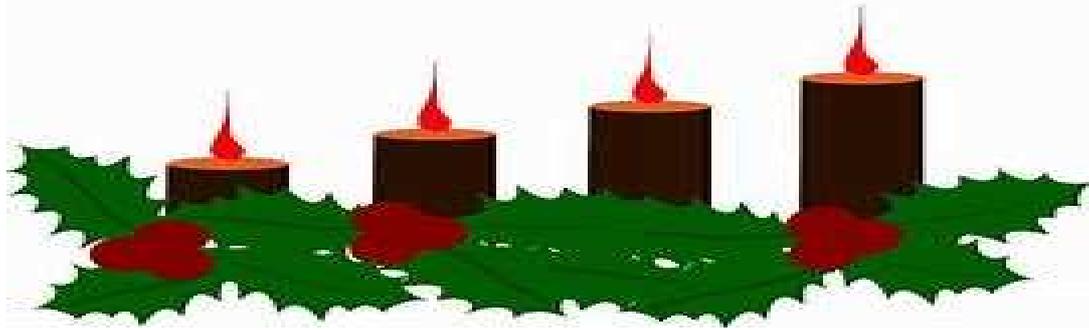
Maureen is now renting her own accommodation in Hamilton. She is working at a plant nursery and on weekends is employed as a Koala Spotter!! She is still hopeful that with her Aged Care Certificate she will start to pick up shifts. But without a driving licence she has been precluded from these jobs. So, being the amazing lady she is, she has passed her Learners Test, bought a second hand car, and is in the process of getting her licence.

God Bless all of you for being part of her journey. And bless you for years of generosity and social spirit that has sustained so many newcomers moving into our community.

Miranda Armstrong.



AN ADVENT REFLECTION



Advent 2019 sees the beginning of the Liturgical Year A – the year of Matthew’s Gospel.

Matthew’s Gospel begins and ends with the promise of God’s presence through the person of Jesus. In Chapter 1: 23, we read that “the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel – a name which means God is with us”, fulfilling the words of Isaiah (7:14). Then in ‘The Great Commission’ (28: 16 -20), we read Jesus’ last words: “And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time” (28: 30). Here, Matthew again establishes a link with the Old Testament wherein we read the promise made by Yahweh in Joshua (1:5): “I will be with you as I was with Moses; I will not leave you or desert you”.

Matthew refers to the Scriptures to show a “continuity between the ancient Jewish tradition and the Christian movement” (Harrington, Daniel, S.J., *Sacra Pagina – The Gospel of Matthew*, The Liturgical Press, Minnesota, 1991, p.17). One of Matthew’s main concerns is to demonstrate the seamless connection between the “old”, the tradition of the Old Testament, and the “new”, the fulfilment of the Law and Prophecies in the person of Jesus:

The point is that Jesus’ life from start to finish was in perfect harmony with the Scriptures. Or to put it more in keeping with Matthew’s outlook – the Scriptures are in perfect harmony with Jesus’ life (Ibid. p.17).

Matt 28:16 -20 in a sense summarises the entire Gospel as it draws together the important themes: Jesus has been given authority (“all power”) by the Father; the disciples are commissioned to teach and baptize not just fellow Jews but to “make disciples of all the Gentiles”; the Spirit of the risen Jesus will guide and protect the Church (God’s people) for always.

Jesus’ parting words echo and explain Isaiah’s name for the Messiah, ‘Emmanuel, God with us’. As noted in the commentary in the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible* (Hahn, S., Mitch, C., Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2000, p.71): “The risen Christ’s ongoing presence in the Church is both ecclesial (18:20)”: ‘For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them’ and “eucharistic (26: 26-28)”: ‘Now as they were eating, Jesus took some bread Take and eat ... this is my body. Then he took the cup..... drink all of you from this For this is my blood....’.

The wonderful and overwhelming thing about Christianity is the defining and fundamental belief both in the transcendence of God and in the immanence of our God,

especially in the mystery of the corporeal presence of Jesus Christ. Through the agency of the sacramental action, the bread and wine bring to us the reality of Christ’s presence with us. He touches each of us personally and most powerfully.

His promise - “I’ll be with you always” - is realised through every Eucharistic meal which we are invited to share, and through the Word proclaimed. The sharing of the meal together not only recalls the intimacy of Jesus’ presence with his disciples and followers on earth, but also actualises the intimacy of the presence of Jesus here and now, and unites us, through that intimacy of God’s love, with our fellow pilgrims.

The song *I’ll be there with You** reminds us of the promise in Matthew’s Gospel, and attempts to capture the close and loving presence of God in our lives. It draws on Scriptural themes: of Jesus (the Spirit of the risen Jesus) as our guide (cf. Psalm 37:23-24, “Yahweh guides our steps, We may fall, but never fatally, since Yahweh supports us by his hand”); of the reassurances that “I will never abandon you” and “I will share your burden” (cf. Matt 11: 28, “Come to me, all you labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest”); of the promise that “my love will nourish you”, especially though the Eucharist.

The lyrics are in the intimate language of the lover or the loving parent: “even as you’re hurting, I will comfort you, smooth your fever’d brow”, “in the cooling of the evening, I will walk with you” (cf. Genesis 3: 8, “God walking in the garden in the cool of the day”).

The promise of the everlasting love of God is experienced through the Eucharistic presence of Jesus and is expressed in the refrain: “I will come to you in bread and wine, gift of Body, gift of Blood sublime, through my love; a gift refined in my love”.

The song leaves us with the certainty of the promise: “I will stand with you, night to day transforming, making all things new – the promise of my love”.

Advent – the time of hope and expectation – the hope and expectation of the fulfilment of God’s promise, of the birth of our Saviour, Jesus the Christ, who comes to make all things new!

Kathleen Nolan

(**I’ll be there with You* – from “Against the Current”, music and lyrics by Mike Nolan.)

Malawi Support Group 2019 Annual Report

Hi Everyone,

This year given Montmorency parishioners may not be familiar with the group I am providing some basic information inclusive of a brief history. We operate only as a very small group and would welcome any new members from Monty who might like to joins us. We hold our very brief, but friendly monthly meetings at 7.30pm, on the first Tuesdays of the month in the gathering area of OLHC. The commitment is not onerous and involves helping with raffles and a whist card night.

The Group was first formed late in 1996 in Eltham, following circulation of a request from the Cathedral to provide support to a parish in Africa. The idea of formally providing material and spiritual support to a Sister Parish in a third world country was eagerly accepted by Our Lady's parishioners in January 1997. We were finally linked with St Kizito's Parish at Chigoneka, Lilongwe in May 1997. Each year we celebrate St Kizito's Feast day (3rd June) at Our Lady's Parish on the nearest weekend, when a collection is taken up.

Money raised in the earlier periods funded the renewal of two churches, accommodation for AIDS orphans, classroom shelters and a compound wall to keep intruders out of the grounds.

What followed were a number of projects to provide improvements and additions to the school, establishing a health clinic, the funding of a new church and nursery school plus more recently the provision of educational scholarships.

The group became a registered charity with its own ABN number and has received donations from Telstra and further generous donations from individuals outside of the group who are attracted by the fact 100% of what is donated goes directly to the most needy within your sister parish. We send funds directly to Fr Taylor's parish account in Lilongwe via the Catholic Development Fund who in turn arrange equivalent US dollars to be transferred via the NAB.



Fr Taylor is a veteran with over 35 years of service in Malawi, with his only support from an assistant priest. However he does get help from their local branch of St Vincent's de Paul society at St Kizito, but apart from that there is no secretarial or parish support. The 6 parishes he supports cover more than 6,000 parishioners and for the most part they reside in either shanty towns or mud brick huts with thatched roofs. Scene below is driving through Ntandira.

The structure of Father's outreach to the parishes is facilitated by small community groups. Each has a head who look after the communities needs as best they can. Within each parish is either a community hut or house attached to the church, which is rented out to provide funds for the needy. Fr Taylor keeps in contact this way to provide support over and above their resources as far as he is able, in addition to liturgical commitments. Confirmations can be quite large events of 300 at one time.

Below is a street scene taken just outside the school gates at Mt Siriza, then elders conferring with Fr Taylor and their typical accommodation. Then a picture of the women's new prison, constructed by the inmates under Fr Taylor's supervision from materials purchased by him. They leant new skills in bricklaying and construction and additionally established a

vegetable garden. Previously the housing was deplorable. A similar exercise was undertaken for the men's gaol.



Our fundraising has reduced over the past few years and this year we will struggle to send a corresponding amount to last year (\$4,000) dependent upon the results of the Christmas raffle. At a pinch we might be able to do so as the last raffle result for Father's day was most encouraging.

Given the size of the group it was decided our future fund raising will comprise principally from raffles and the Whist night which continues to be a very successful social event.

Thanks again for all you're wonderful support which means your sister parish's needy students and orphans can continue with their education.

This year was also a difficult year for Fr Taylor but he now has an Indian priest helping him and continues to enjoy good health. In his last correspondence Fr. Taylor informed us Malawi continues to struggle with poor leadership and escalating prices, especially for students. Moral leadership has mostly failed and yet the people go on smiling – the warm heart of Africa. I expect that position hasn't changed much this year. But I will shortly be writing to Fr Taylor for an update which I will share with you when it comes to hand.

Lindsay Byrnes

Memories

It was a one-off occasion! My three sisters and I were off to Sydney for a girls' weekend. We were transported by limousine to our hotel and enjoyed a celebratory champagne in transit.

Being born 10 years after my closest sister and the last one off the production line, I was in a different space from my siblings so holidays together were not practical. It was a rare treat to share impressions of our parents and growing up in West Brunswick. We each experienced our parents through a very different perspective. So it was quite an emotional time as we recalled our wonderful mother and 'interesting' father.

Next day we toured some popular spots and eventually headed back to our hotel opposite Hyde Park. On the way, we thought it would be nice to pop into the beautiful St Mary's Cathedral. It was a relief to step from noisy College St into the all-enveloping tranquillity of that sacred space.

We moved softly down the aisle then sat down to admire one of the smaller chapels behind the main altar. I gave thanks for my wonderful sisters who have looked after me so well as the baby of the family. I had many blessings to count!

The pew that we shared had the rich patina of many years. Then I noticed some carving on the seat.

MTT.....our mother's initials.

Barbara Hermans





Monty and Eltham PC 2020 Discernment

Consolidated PC 2020 Discernment Reports

Twenty-six parishioners gathered on the evening of 25 November to prayerfully work through the Discernment agenda outlined over preceding weeks in the *Monty & Eltham* newsletter. Two 'Callings' from God to the Church in Australia were to be addressed. These were chosen from the PC 2020 Snapshot Reports on responses to the question: What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?

The first Calling was for a Church that is 'Inclusive, Participatory, and Synodal'. This was interpreted as encapsulating the theme of Church Governance.

The second Calling was for a Church that is 'joyful, hope-filled, and a servant community'. This was interpreted as encapsulating the themes of Service and Outreach.

Address to these Callings was to be assisted by resources provided. These included:

Short Scriptural readings – Acts 4:32-33 for the first calling, Matt 25: 35-37 for the second.

Photocopies of the quotes provided in the Snapshot Reports on each of the two Callings.

Relevant items from the previously distributed Joint Parish Statement sent to the PC2020 organizers earlier this year.

On the night, participants were asked to divide into three groups, two groups on Church Governance, and one group on the Service and Outreach theme. Each group had a convener and a note-taker. The conveners were told that tight control over the agenda was not required, but free-ranging discussion encouraged.

Reports from the three groups

Group 1

Group 1 focused around the Calling to be Participatory, Inclusive and Synodal.

In a wide-ranging discussion eight themes were evident:

1. The reading from Acts shows us the Church of the Apostles drawing strength from complete trust in the Holy Spirit, sharing of material goods in common, and leadership exercised through witness and testimony of the Apostles rather than assertion of the authority of office.
2. As the Church grew, it was always difficult to maintain the Church as it was in the first century. But the Church of the Apostles remains as call and inspiration for renewal.
3. Consideration of the very early Church gives rise to questions about the representativeness and

inclusiveness of the Plenary Council process so far. Is it looking from the points of view of all those who desire to be part of the Church? Is it going to be representative of all age-groups? Have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders been sufficiently represented? Is the role of women in the Church sufficiently recognised and their voices adequately heard and registered?

4. Perhaps in our day as we seek renewal, God may want us to learn from Aboriginal Australians – regarding care of their community and land and extending care for one another beyond family and friends to the whole community.

5. A symptom of the loss of inclusiveness and unity in our Church is that lapsed Catholics remain outside the Church because they feel excluded, and marginalised. Further, they see the Church community broken by sexual abuse, and perceive it to have become irrelevant in contemporary society.

6. In the face of that, we who remain need to show by example why it is good to belong to our faith community. We need to find and celebrate the positives, expressing our faith that God is calling everyone back.

7. Specific changes in Church life required for the Church to become more Participatory, Inclusive and Synodal, to include:

Restoration and promotion of the Third Rite of Confession, while retaining and encouraging the First Rite. (Participants differed on the value of one-on-one personal Confession.)

Women to be included fully in Church life, including the opportunity to be deacons and priests. Women to be given the opportunity to share fully in Church governance and mission as seems was likely in the very early Church.

Change the composition of the priesthood as outlined in item 5 of the Joint Parish Statement.

Attention be given to the education of teachers in Catholic schools to equip them to pass on our Faith (On this too there were differences aired between participants around whether the viewpoint of the teacher quoted in the Snapshot summary accorded with personal experience in schools.)

The need for those involved PC2020 processes at all levels to be mindful of Pope Francis' willingness to allow Australian bishops to make changes in Plenary Council procedures and protocols appropriate to local needs.

Group 2

This group's reflections also ranged around the calling to make a Church that is 'Inclusive, Participatory and Synodal'.

Before starting on the agenda, this group discussed the problem of 'the missing young' in the local and national Church. This was introduced by one member and agreed by all to be a matter that should be addressed by PC 2020 as a matter of urgency.

Then, taking off from the reading from Acts, the group considered what might be needed if the contemporary Church were to approach the ideal of community-sharing evident in the very early Church. Among other things the group considered that it would be necessary for lay people to reflect deeply on how we are connected to the organized, hierarchical Church and how local and national connections, within and beyond the Church might be strengthened. To this end, it was agreed that learning from Church communities that seem most alive and most akin to those found in the very early Church was important. One member of the group who had visited Aboriginal communities in the NT reported that the Aboriginal ministry and liturgies she observed there were inspiring in terms of the participatory nature and inclusiveness displayed.

The group considered aspects of relations between clergy and laity that need attention if the participatory and synodal calling is to be realised. In particular,

There was a need for laity to be direct in critique of the organized Church and in presenting demands to it.

There was a need for creativity in 'cracking the armour of resistance' to greater inclusiveness and

synodality

On the other hand, some members of the group thought it unwise to ‘go in all guns blazing’ but rather to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There seemed to be agreement that persistence was necessary in engagements with Church authorities.

There is the need for present clerical leaders in the Church to ‘promote servant leadership’. This would involve a restructuring of the education of clergy, and the requirement that new priests be offered regular mentoring and support to develop servant leadership (as in Item 4 of the Joint Parish Statement)

Group 3

This group revolved around the Church’s calling to be ‘joyful, hope-filled and servant community’.

The group started with discussion of what members agree was the biggest problem in the life of the contemporary Church in Australia: sexual abuse and the mishandled responses by Church leaders as the facts have emerged, especially in the Royal Commission Report. This was anything but a Church geared to service, and a Church of joy and help.

On the other hand, hope was found in our own parish community which displays an image of the Church of joy and help in its liturgies and its service and support groups. In our parish there has been support from our priests that has allowed lay leadership to grow and new notions of service (e.g. in relation to the environment and to newly arrived migrants and refugees) to develop.

The group considered various ways in which the whole PC 2020 Church could respond to its calling to joy, hope and service. These included:

A Church with a new leadership model derived from analysis of pastoral success stories and that is more inclusive of women and presently marginalised groups.

A Church with permanent Pastoral Councils as a key element in its diocesan and national structure

A Church with more lay-led and alternative liturgies.

Statement on Synodality prepared by a parishioner from Eltham who presented it to Group 2

There is ample scriptural and theological basis for a greatly increased focus on synodality in today’s Church. The Gospels resound with the message of how the Kingdom of God should differ from what was then and is now the accepted way of ministry.

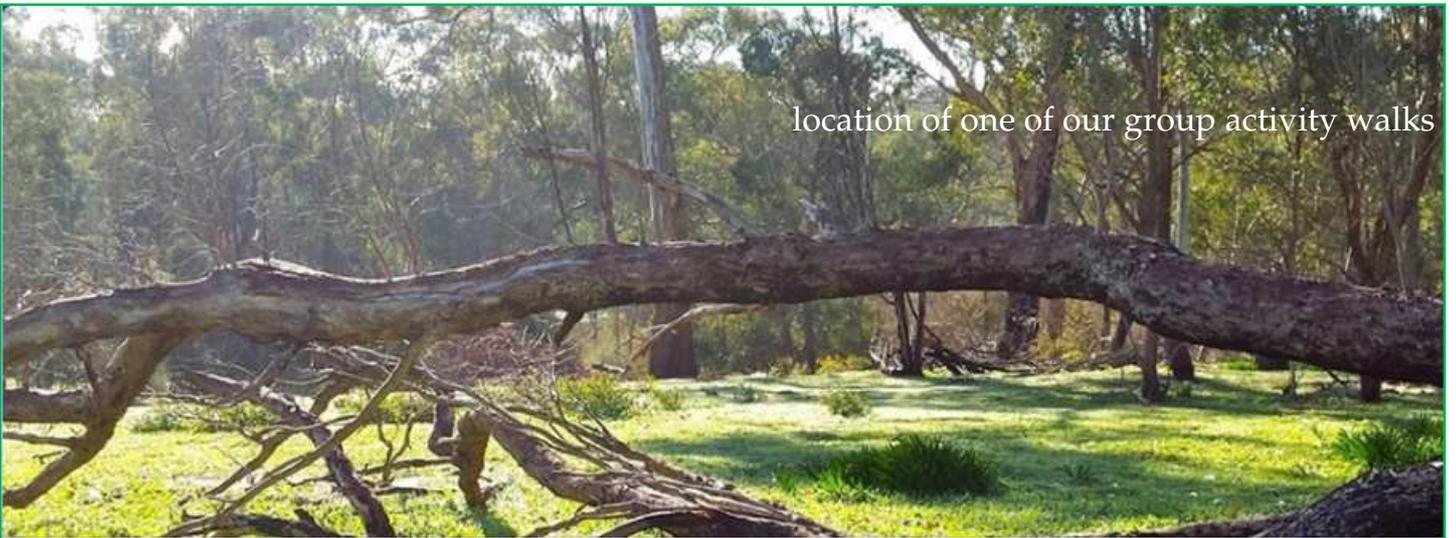
Lumen Gentium describes the Church as the People of God – All members by virtue of Baptism, honoured with the same dignity.

Christus Dominus on pastoral care of the Church – a Pastoral Council in every diocese, synods and councils reinvigorated.

The International Theological Commission’s *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church* is replete with encouragement of greater involvement of the People of God in Church governance.

Properly increasing the role of the laity in the context of synodality could well overcome the evil of clericalism so pervasive in the Church.

location of one of our group activity walks



Sunday Brunchers is a group for people who are single (whether you've been married before or not, have children or not) and most importantly, share Christian values. Our lives are at the stage where they run more around commitments to work/children/family and we tend to socialise mainly with already partnered friends so the opportunity to meet like minded single people doesn't often present itself. If you're looking for something more meaningful than swiping right, less confronting than the impersonal online experience or even just friendship with others in the same situation, then this is the group for you. It's for those who have a connection to the Catholic or Christian faith, whether it be from the past, present or through family (because let's face it, there aren't a lot of singles in their 30s - 50s sitting in the pews at church). If you know someone who's considering a relationship but hasn't found the right person, let them know about this.

We try to incorporate an activity into our social get-togethers as a point of difference. The activity is designed to be an ice breaker in order for people to enjoy themselves in a relaxed environment. Sunday Brunchers is an inclusive platform where group members are encouraged to put forward suggestions for future activities.

We hope to offer something more respectful and real than what the online experience seems to offer. **Come along and join us on the second Sunday of the month, what have you got to lose?**



To view the article about the group that appeared in Melbourne Catholic: <https://melbournecatholic.org.au/News/sunday-pasta-making-workshop-for-single-catholics>

For enquiries or to register your email address for upcoming events, please email: sbrunchers@gmail.com and follow our Facebook Page 'Sunday Brunchers Christian Singles North East Melbourne'.