



ST PATRICK'S PARISH
MORTLAKE



Parish Newsletter Summer 2020

Telephone: (02) 97431017

Email: parish@stpatsmortlake.org.au

www.stpatsmortlake.org.au

Message from Fr Tom

As we come to celebrate Christmas 2020, we come to the end of a year that none of us could have imagined. We have faced challenges which we have borne, and hopefully also found inner reserves and resilience. Whilst our ability to physically gather and interact as a community has been stifled, we are nevertheless called to maintain community and identity in a new way.

The challenge for us, as a Church, is always to face challenges and continue to change and grow. So it is for us in 2020, and what will continue to be the case in 2021. The message of Hope and Peace found in Jesus Christ and in creating a community of love and friendship has to be the key to identifying who I am.

I pray that this Christmas is one where we can genuinely take time out to enjoy time with family, friends and those on the margins. Let us have a greater understanding of what it means to walk through adversity with dignity and charity. I especially pray for the many members of our parish community who have lost loved ones this year — may you know the presence and peace of Christ in your lives especially at this time.

Thank you to you all for your continued involvement in our parish. 2021 is full of hope and opportunity, and we will continue to support and care for one another. Peace and Joy this Christmas.

Fr Tom

Christmas Liturgies

Since COVID-19 has restricted the number of parishioners who can attend each Mass, Father Tom has decided to hold additional Masses and services this Christmas so as many as possible can celebrate the birthday of Jesus within our local parish community.

Especially for the children and families, a **Christmas Liturgy and Communion Service** will be held on **Wednesday 23 December**. It will commence at 6pm with an outdoor service in the Church grounds followed at 7:30pm by a joyous but prayerful Carol Service in the Church.

Christmas Eve Masses will be held on **Thursday 24 December at 12 Noon, 6pm, 8pm and Midnight**.

As usual, the 6pm Mass will be the Family Nativity Mass and children are invited to dress as Shepherds and Angels.

Christmas Day Masses will be held on Friday 25 December at 7:30am, 9am and 10:30 am

Each family must register prior to attendance at: <https://www.trybooking.com/680925> or by ringing the Parish Office on 9743 1017 on Tuesday or Friday. **Registrations open 1 December 2020**, and since numbers are restricted, it makes sense to register early.

Please note that all parishioners are encouraged to wear face masks during mass

Acknowledgement of Country

St Patrick's Catholic Parish, Mortlake acknowledges the Wangal clan, one of 29 tribes of the Eora nation and the traditional custodians of this land.

St Patrick's Catholic Parish, Mortlake pays respect to elders past and present and extends this respect to all Aboriginal people living in or visiting the Parish.



An Enduring Flame

Dr Damian Gleeson

St Patrick's Mortlake, 1885-2020

Officially launched Sunday 15th November 2020

Congratulations to Dr Damian Gleeson on the publication of his well researched history of St Patrick's Mortlake, written especially for the celebration of our parish's 125th Anniversary.

In a year beset with the greatest trial in most of our lifetimes, the COVID-19 pandemic, it was a special joy to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of our parish, at St Patrick's Mortlake with the launch of our parish history: **An Enduring Flame, St Patrick's Mortlake, 1885-2020** on Sunday 15th November, 2020. The celebration symbolised the optimism of our parish, that we will endure, as have the thousands of parishioners before us.

We were blessed with excellent weather for this COVID-19 Safe Open Air launch. Sadly, numbers had to be restricted due to government procedures. Our COVID Marshall, Marie Piccin and her team of volunteers ensured we maintained the strict protocols. A large event to involve the various members of the parish had been originally planned, but this needed to be revised and scaled back considerably to comply with COVID protocols.

The organising committee was our Parish Priest, Father Tom Stevens, Marie Piccin, Frances Windon and Monica Dutton with their planning beginning last year. Also John Clarke, Bob Mayor and Parish Secretary, Brenda Johnston were invaluable with their ongoing assistance.

Sister Barbara Bolster RSM began the proceedings with acknowledgment of country and opening prayer, our Parish Priest, Father Tom welcomed the guests. Monsignor John Usher launched the book with a splendid outline of our history and a pertinent comment that the Parish's history belongs to the people as there would have been no history without the contributions of our loyal parishioners. He also explained the metaphor in the title: it is a reference to the Mortlake Gas Works (now Breakfast Point) which helped to lead to the foundation of our parish as well as our survival during many world and local crises. He made reference to the Irish Australian working class community who were our pioneers and paid tribute to the changing demographics over the 125 years acknowledging the contributions of the Italian Australians and now people from many different nationalities and backgrounds. Finally, the author Dr Damian Gleeson responded and provided details of the book contents. Parishioner Mike Bailey was MC of the event, demonstrating his customary warmth

and aplomb. Irish music was provided by our talented musicians Mrs Lauraine Muir and Ms Jane Kent. The many volunteers who came to assist on the day showed great generosity of spirit and generosity with their time. It was a wonderful event.

"It's a newsy easy readable document and a scholarly work that will benefit historians and would be historians. Well done on all fronts. The book is a tremendous testament to our parish and we should all be very proud to be part of this enduring flame."

Bulletin 22/11/2020

An Enduring Flame which celebrates our parish history is now available for sale. A wonderful Christmas gift. You can order a copy by completing the order form at the back of the Church or contacting the parish office on Tuesday and Fridays on: 9743 1017 or email: parish@stpatsmortlake.org.au.

Father Tom Stevens' welcome speech at the launch of An Enduring Flame

My friends, welcome as we come here today to celebrate the 125th anniversary year of the foundation of this St Patrick's Church in Mortlake **and launch the parish history book**. Welcome to you the good parishioners of Mortlake first and foremost, and it's great to have a sense of community gathering returning, albeit in new forms.

I'd also like to specifically welcome the Mayor of Canada Bay, Angelo Tsirekas, Councillors Michael Megna and Andrew Ferguson and your partners and wives, Sr Maureen Heffernan RSC on behalf of the Sisters of Charity, Ms Mandy Westgate, Principal of our school, Monsignor John Usher, Vicar General: Very Rev Dr Gerald Gleeson, Rev Fathers Egan and Camilleri.

It has been a strange year hasn't it — with joys and frustrations mixed in together. The opening line of the Vatican II document on the Church in the modern world reads:

"The Joys and Hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men and women of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, **these are** the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ and His Church"

The point being that they are one and the same—the Church, your parish must also reflect those joys and sorrows. . . we must be walking the journey together!!

We come to give thanks for the shoulders on which we stand and to renew our hope in a bright future **together founded around Jesus Christ. This peninsular community, as the stories in this book illustrates, is one that is no stranger to overcoming adversity in sharing the Joys and Anxieties**

that have presented since 1885 for the Catholic community here. It is of overcoming adversity, is a proud community which has sought to provide an environment of betterment and encouragement.

Today's Gospel talks of the TALENTS which we are given and of our need to use them — **this parish is unbounded in examples of people using their talents for the service of God and each other. Daily, each of us must search for and use our talents.** My great thanks goes to Dr Damian Gleeson, a man who uses his talents, tirelessly working over the last 9 months — Damian's professionalism, diligence and patience has resulted in a quality publication. Thank you Damian — thank you for your friendship, and dogged hard work in putting this together, interviewing countless parishioners, families, priests including Fr Peter Morrissey (now sadly RIP), thank you for your hard hard work, hard work which has epitomised this community from its humble and proud beginnings. On behalf of this parish and personally — Thank You Damian. Thanks also to John Clarke, Bob Mayor, and Marie Piccin who have been especially involved in this process.

Special thanks and prayers today firstly to the thousands of parishioners who have passed through these doors, have cried and laughed with joys and hopes, with grief and anxieties in

these very grounds, parishioners seeking to build opportunity, love and inclusiveness. Their legacy is a profoundly positive one which shapes our identity.

My thanks to the City of Canada Bay and Trevor Lee and Son for your contributions to our parish 125th anniversary celebrations. To our musicians Jane Kent and Lauraine Muir for the Music, to Marie Piccin, Frances Windon and Monica Dutton for all your hard work in organising today in our steering committee and to the volunteers serving us in these times of greater necessary restrictions. Thank you. To Stephanie Parker, Roberto, Gina, Maria and Brenda and your team of gardeners — thank you for the efforts in bringing colour and energy in God's creation that surrounds us today. Where there is Beauty there is God.

My friends, each one of our Joys and Hopes, Griefs and Anxieties are wrapped up in this community of Faith of St Patrick's Mortlake — we give thanks for the Past and know that our future is bright so long as we continue to put our faith in the message of the son of the Carpenter and continue to assist one another in growing our community.

St Mary MacKillop – Pray for Us.

St Patrick – Pray for Us

Let's Crack On!!



Faces of St Pat's: Sinead Kent and the Kent Family

The Kent family joined St Patrick's in December 2009 having just arrived from London via Dublin on December 1st. By January 2010 all the children were serving at Mass and fell quickly into step with Mons John. They felt very welcomed from the very start.

Sinead and her family's involvement in our parish life

I was blessed to be sitting in Mass in 2010 when Bob Mayor spoke about being a Catechist at our local Mortlake Public School. Whilst we do not have the same role in the UK for Catechists, I was a Catechist for 10 years in a Parish Program capacity providing Sacramental preparation, Saturday Classes for the Travelling Families, RCIA, Baptism preparation etc. I was so delighted that Bob accepted my yes

We have four children who serve the community using their gifts and as parents it is a joy to see how they have grown into committed young adults with a solid connection to Parish. I believe that Parish is central to community and the Spirit of St Patrick's makes it easy to become involved.

Our eldest son, Eric, is an Acolyte at the 9am Mass and has served this Mass since we joined the Parish. He serves faithfully and two stories to share would be: the email he sent to our PP in the UK when he started serving, to say that here in Sydney Altar Servers could wear shorts and sandals! Our ex PP was strictly shiny shoes and long trousers! The other experience Eric had was carrying the relic of St Francis Xavier from St Patrick's. He was desperate to do this so I said if he wanted the morning off school he would have to call his school Principal at Holy Cross and ask for the time - he did and it was very moving to watch him as a young man taking part in this ritual.

Kate is our flautist and did exceptionally well at HSC in music. I believe the regular practices she had with Lauraine Muir, who actually writes specific parts



for the flute that truly brings a deeper level of prayer to each Mass. Kate is also sharing her beautiful voice during COVID as the Flute is not permissible.

Alan was also an Altar Server, and once learned never forgotten. His gift is that he will step up whenever an extra pair of hands is needed at the various gatherings the Parish has during Lent, particularly on Good Friday with the Children's Stations of the Cross.

Jane has shared her vocal gifts with the Parish and we have watched her develop into a proficient and professional vocalist. We believe her gift has been blessed by the continual practice and the excellence that Lauraine expects. The hidden gem of the music ministry at St Patrick's is Lauraine Muir and for that we will always give thanks.

Eric Sn is generally - EVERYWHERE! He is behind every event I am part of, he will fix a pipe or leak, unblock, offer advice, hang posters, light Easter fires, fix the face of poor baby Jesus, and generally pop in to most Parishioners who need an odd plumbing job done. He is a barter system kind of bloke and a game of Golf at Concord or a little sup of a single malt covers most jobs!! He is a community man and also values the community that grows within Parish.

2020 has been a tough year but as they say, you can't keep a great community down. The many people who got behind the narthex window displays that started during Lent/Holy week were phenomenal. Fr Tom has supported the continuation of these awesome, prayerful and inclusive window displays and the wonderful Altar Society continues to draw us all in week after week...

Now that we are coming back the meetings have started, Parish Events are happening again, Masses are being planned, Advent and Christmas services are back on the agenda, and things are looking up. The personal joy for me is Fr Tom's graciousness



in making time to record the Children's Liturgy reading each week. The feedback from families and from the children who attend has been fantastic. If families cannot get to Sunday Mass this is some small way for Fr Tom to get into their homes and meet them exactly where they are. I believe our role as baptised Catholics is to provide opportunities to gather, hear, see and connect; the rest is up to the Holy Spirit. In 2020 Fr Tom has given us some wonderful opportunities to do this. We have always been a vibrant Parish but there is an exciting air about this place.

The future of St Pat's:

Growing, growing, and growing! This is a Parish that has an 'Enduring Flame' as our new Parish book is called. You cannot come to any event in this Parish without someone smiling at you, asking you if you are ok, inviting you to join something - this Parish is one of my biggest passions. I have introduced many opportunities for the good people of Mortlake to be part of Social Justice Initiatives from Vinnie's Van services, Asylum Seeker appeals, the great Sydney Street Feast, Mini Vinnie's Days at ACU and letter writing and appeals as they come along. The passion for aid here at St Pat's is phenomenal!

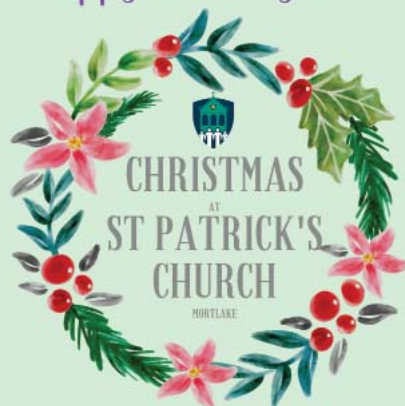
I have been fortunate to be part of many groups in the Parish and each one brings me great joy. The current Children's Liturgy team, Jenni, Annemarie, Sonia, Chiara and Erika tirelessly create an opportunity for families to send their children to the hall on a Sunday during 9am Mass. We are always open to new members and it is very addictive - come and join us. The Social Justice Ministry is faithfully served by Trevor, Bill, Cathy and Linda.

St Patrick's Mortlake is not only named after the patron Saint of Ireland but it has the welcoming warmth that everyone speaks of when they visit Ireland, so to the newly arrived Kents in 2010, the Spirit of the original Irish migrants who gathered and prayed in this place over 125 years ago, permeated through this community to welcome our family and we are all very grateful for the 'welcome on the mat', the 'smiling eyes' and the 'glorious St Patrick' who welcomes all who enter our Church.

Thanks to Sinead and the Kent family. We are certainly blessed that they chose St Pat's Mortlake as their new parish. We wish you another true blue Aussie Christmas again this year.



Happy Birthday Jesus



CHRISTMAS LITURGY AND COMMUNION SERVICE

Wednesday 23 December

6pm: Children and Family - Outdoor Service in the Church Grounds

7.30pm: Prayerful Carol Service in the Church

CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES

Thursday 24 December

12 Noon, 8pm and Midnight Mass

6pm: - Family Nativity Mass, children invited to dress as Shepherds and Angels

CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES

Friday 25 December

7.30am, 9am and 10.30am

REGISTRATION REQUIRED PER FAMILY AT

<https://www.trybooking.com/680925>

What's Been Happening

St Vincent de Paul

In the year of the Covid-19 pandemic we could begin by asking what didn't happen. So many planned events, liturgical and social were cancelled due to the coronavirus. Our year was going to begin with a joyous celebration of our 125th Anniversary. Instead for several weeks our church was actually closed due to government regulations in an attempt to stop the spread of the highly contagious virus. (23 March 2020)

- ✦ Our last gathering before the closure of the church was the celebration of St Patrick's Day 17 March, 2020, and even then the Covid-19 protocols were in place.
- ✦ The last Mass before the closure was an open air Mass mid March.
- ✦ Baptisms were postponed and initially weddings were restricted to 5 people in attendance and funerals 10.
- ✦ On Line Masses and Zoom reflections on the Gospel became the usual practice.
- ✦ A new Bulletin format and email contact list was created. Thanks to all those involved in setting this up especially Mario Sita, Brenda Johnston, Sister Barbara and Marie Piccin
- ✦ On the weekend of 4 July we could have Mass again in the Church for 50 people in our church : our new routine was to book our place at Mass, sanitise our hands on arrival, maintain social distancing, wear a mask and use the provided sanitising wipes to clean our pews after Mass.
- ✦ 2 August Mass booking system began, many thanks to Fr Tom and Mario Sita.
- ✦ Mid August Baptisms resumed with restricted numbers.
- ✦ The Children's Liturgy commenced on line with Father Tom (you-tube star) and during Sunday Mass from 6 September.
- ✦ First Holy Communion was celebrated in two groups, 13 & 20 September.
- ✦ The Archdiocese Dempsey Awards were given By Father Tom to Otto Petrin and Bill Cramsie 27 September. In normal times this award is given by the Archbishop in the Cathedral.
- ✦ 1 October, Father Tom is appointed Parish Priest of St Patrick's. Congratulations Father Tom, we are glad you are staying with us.
- ✦ Parents' Evening, chat and meal in the Presbytery commenced 28 October, 2020.
- ✦ 1 November Annual Blessing of the Pets was able to take pace, both during Mass and afterwards in the Church Hall, social distancing being maintained.
- ✦ 2 November All Souls' Day Mass and return of the Bingo Group after 7 months.
- ✦ 15 November launch of Parish history, *An Enduring Flame*.
- ✦ St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal
- ✦ 29 November David's Place Luncheon hosted by parish.
- ✦ 3 December Monsignor John turns 80. Happy birthday John.
- ✦ Christmas celebrations begin-see details in this newsletter.

Many thanks to our parish Priest Father Tom Stevens who has steered us through this difficult year. Despite all of the interruptions to our usual parish activities, we still celebrated 56 Baptisms, 7 weddings and sadly conducted 41 funerals throughout the year. The contributions of volunteers among our parishioners and in every ministry are so significantly invaluable. We thank them all with heartfelt gratitude. A Happy and Safe Christmas, the Communications Ministry.

Our Generous Parishioners-Support Christmas Appeal

Heartfelt thanks to the St Patrick's parish and school for their generous support of the 2020 St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal. Like so many things in 2020, it was a bit harder to organise, with lower numbers allowed at Church Masses and communication more difficult to arrange.

Despite these difficulties, your wonderful donations of hams, puddings, cakes, bon bons and all things festive mean that many local families, struggling especially in this COVID-impact year, can have a plentiful Christmas meal and a bright and joyously decorated table.

Because of your generosity, local children in need were provided with a beautifully wrapped gift to ensure a very happy Christmas and donations in excess are packed ready to be transported to support the families in Forbes-Wilcannia region who are struggling in the central west NSW.

St Patrick's community provided their renowned, wonderful support for the Christmas envelope appeal and bucket collection, despite the difficulties COVID provided in organising the collections. Those financial contributions will allow our Mortlake Conference to support battling families across this holiday season and into 2021.

The members of the Mortlake Conference of the St Vincent de Paul are extremely grateful for your assistance in 2020 which allows us to support local families and individuals who are most in need.

This year has resulted in some normally independent families, struck by COVID-19 lockdowns and business slow-downs, contacting the Society for the first time. Your help has allowed the St Vincent de Paul to offer a dignified hand up to these families that will support them getting back on their feet.

Thank you again for your wonderful generosity.



h appy Birthday Mons John

On 3rd December Monsignor John Usher will celebrate his 80th birthday. We wish our beloved Father John a very happy, carefree birthday and pray that he is blessed with good health, serenity and peace. We give thanks for these eight decades and the many years he shared with us at St Pat's as our Parish priest.





As the year draws to a close, we have been really thankful that the families in our school have remained safe and well. We have continued to try and give the children different opportunities in their learning, even though it has been such a different and sometimes limiting year.

We recently welcomed our new Kindergarten children for 2021 and we will look forward to having the children with us next year as well as a new play space for our growing school. We have celebrated our wonderful Grandparents earlier in the term and honoured those who have fought so hard to protect our country on Remembrance Day. We look forward to celebrating the end of the year and remembering what really counts during Advent.... Hope, Faith, Joy and Love.

We congratulate the Parish on an amazing 125 years, led by community minded priests right through to Father Tom, the great Charity sisters and many beautiful parishioners and we hope that as our school continues to grow that we honour the traditions and values that the parish has been built on.

Amanda Westgate
Principal, St Patrick's School Mortlake

David's Place

David's Place is an inner-city space where Sydney's homeless and marginalised can come to find friendship, peace and spiritual support and connect with the wider community. It was created to be a place where Jesus would have liked to hang out, where it doesn't matter if you're rich or poor or where life has led you.

On 29 November, the St Patrick's Parish hosted a group of 15 people from David's Place to Mass at 10:30am followed by a BBQ lunch in the Presbytery. It was hosted by a wonderful mix of enthusiastic volunteers from the Parish, the Social Justice Ministry, St Patrick's School, and the St Vincent de Paul.

Following Mass, the festivities commenced with cheese and crackers and soft drinks as the group met with many of the parishioners and settled a round inside and outside tables in the Presbytery. There was a real hum of conversation laced with good humour and fun as the two groups enjoyed lunch and got to know each other.



The volunteers had the BBQs running hot, producing a delicious menu of lamb koftas, sausages, and lamb cutlets which were paired with several different salads and a variety of bread rolls. However, the real gourmet highlights of the lunch were provided by the mouth-watering pavlovas and ice cream logs dished up for dessert.

The event provided a wonderful avenue for the homeless to enjoy a rare spread of good food in an accepting environment, and for the parishioners to gain a real insight into the issues and problems suffered by the poor and homeless of our fair city.

What a perfect way for St Patrick's Parish to head into the season of Christmas-real charity and the spirit of giving in action!



Get social with us....



www.stpatsmortlake.org.au



Search Facebook -
St Patrick's Mortlake



Search Instagram -
stpatsmortlake