



ST PATRICK'S PARISH  
MORTLAKE



## Parish Newsletter Summer 2023

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## Message from Father Tom

Religious Freedom is the Key to unlocking the best of Humanity. The promotion and practice of religious freedom is central to understanding a loving God, but also a loving humanity. We often hear commentators speak of 'religion' as being the cause of the world's major conflicts, which we sadly see unfolding in the Holy Land with Palestinian and Israeli people. The root cause of the problem though doesn't lie in religion, but in religious extremism and in the dark aspect of people's quest for power, principally seeing power through the acquisition of land, as also is in evidence in the war in Ukraine.

If we examine the development of our laws in this country and indeed in the history of English common law, the issue of 'rights', firstly attaches to issues of land ownership – well before the notion of 'human rights' evolved. This is a sad reality of which we need to be mindful. The desire for power through land ownership is always a formidable driving force in many of the world's historical and current tensions.

Religious rights and freedoms go hand in hand with human rights and affording Hope in an otherwise troubled world. Let us pray for Peace and Religious Tolerance and understanding in our world – that the suffering inflicted by war (which always first targets the young, sick and elderly), be averted. In our Christian faith, we see Christ himself, fully human and fully divine, showing us a path of love, forgiveness and mercy. Humanity can be, and is, so much better than this!

**We at St Pat's wish everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas. Many thanks for making our parish so harmonious and inclusive. Remember, everyone is welcome here.**

Peace and Love

Father Tom

## St Patrick's Christmas Liturgy Times

### Mass times:

### Christmas Eve Masses - Sunday 24 December

6.30pm Children's Liturgy

8.00pm Mass on Parish Green

Please bring a chair so you can be comfortable.

### Midnight Mass

### Christmas Day Masses - Monday 25 December

7.00am

9.00am

10.30am

No evening Mass



May your **Christmas** be blessed by the **baby Jesus!**

### 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.

# Faces of St Pats – Sister Margaret Valentine

A special welcome to Sister Margaret Valentine RSC, our new leader of the St Pat's Pastoral Care Ministry. We asked Sister Margaret, who is a Sister of Charity, to tell us something about herself.

Sister Margaret:

As a child, my family settled in the Western Suburbs – Auburn and later Cabramatta and I attended St John's Primary School Auburn and St Mary's Girls' High School Liverpool (now All Saints' College, Liverpool). So I am a 'Charity' educated girl through and through!

At the age of 18 I entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity. After my Novitiate training I gained my B. Ed and commenced my ministry as a Primary School teacher. This ministry opened up for me many and varied experiences – moving from Sydney, to Hobart, to Canberra, to Melbourne and then back to Sydney again! (Join Religious Life and see the world! – although packing your bag and moving every few years calls for resilience, faith and trust and a lot of letting go!) I have taught Kindergarten to Year 6 and been a Principal in a couple of schools.

In 2007 I had a change of ministry – taking on the role of Coordinator of the Myall Coast Parish in the Maitland/Newcastle Diocese. This parish consisted of three Mass centres: Karuah, Tea Gardens and Bulahdelah. I spent nine wonderful years working in this parish, alongside committed, energising lay people who gave of their all to ensure that God's message of love was spread within the faith and local community. What an enriching experience!

Currently I spend one day a week at All Saints' Liverpool as a Pastoral Care Family Liaison Person. I also visit and support our elderly sisters who reside at Auburn.



Since joining the parish I have slowly met parishioners, mainly those who attend the 9am Sunday Mass. However I am hoping that now that I have joined the Parish Liturgy Group and the Parish Pastoral Team my circle of known parishioners will grow, as will my appreciation of life here, in the parish.

I believe the future of the church lies in our hands – we are the face, the hands and feet of Jesus in today's world. It is only together that we can build the kingdom of God in our 'small patch'.

Thank you Sister Margaret for telling us about yourself. We are very pleased you are now a valuable member of our parish and wish you a very fulfilling time in your new role leading the Pastoral Care team. It's also serendipitous that our school was once in the care of the Sisters of Charity. You are really home.



When I arrived in Concord West in July last year, I decided to join the St Patrick's Parish and am very pleased that I did so. I have found the community friendly, involved, enthusiastic, and outward looking. It has been easy to find my place within the community. I also feel comfortable with Fr Tom's style of parish leadership.

I love that here at St Patrick's, there are many young families who are connected and involved and seem to feel very much 'at home' – this obviously gives the parish energy, life and hope, a blessing that many parishes today do not experience.





# St Pat's Biggest Morning Tea

Thank you to all that were involved in the organisation of the Australian Biggest Morning Tea here at Patrick's Mortlake on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2023. It was a wonderful success. It was so good to be entertained by so many people, especially the school children.





# St Pat's Wrap Up for 2023

As we approach Christmas we can look back at the St Pat's Parish's Mortlake year with pride. Once again it's been busy, both spiritually, sacramentally, prayerfully as well as socially. Of course this is all due to the leadership of our Parish Priest, Father Tom Stevens and the unstinting work and enthusiasm of the many Ministries as well as volunteers together with the support of the parishioners. Father Tom is always encouraging and positive and it's gratifying to tick off the many achievements this year.

Several big events stand out: the blessing of our new statue of Jesus in the Parish Parklands and the blessing of the refurbished Parish Hall. The Annual Animal Blessing was again an important part of our calendar. Of course there were also the various Twilight events starting with the St Patrick's Day Festival, the Taste of the Orient and culminating in the Twilight Christmas Festival to be held on 8 December.

In between there has been our parish's generous support by donating truckloads of groceries to the Jesuit's Social Services' Ignite Food Store and the seasonal Vinnies' appeals. In November, the month of the Holy Souls, we continued with the Remembrance Masses and wrote the names of our deceased family members and friends on cards, placed in a basket at the foot of the altar.

In addition to the sacramental program described by Bob Mayor in this edition and the **Adult Presentation Series: History of our Salvation Story** there have been Parish lunches, Bingo, the Friday Children's playgroup, the Biggest Morning Tea, Youth Masses and Social events, the Man Walk and Singing group just to name a few events at St Pat's. We farewelled our wonderful Parish Secretary of 15 years, Brenda Johnston and welcomed our new secretary, Petra Nakhoul.

We thanked Betty Flynn for her dedicated leadership over many years of the Pastoral Care Ministry and welcomed Sister Margaret Valentine in this role. Both Brenda and Betty have left their mark on our Parish and have been generous in their support and commitment to St Pat's. We wish them happiness



and good health in the future.

## Our St Pat's statistics for 2023

This past year was definitely a very busy one for the St Pat's Mortlake Parish. During 2023, we welcomed 91 people into the Church with the sacrament of Baptism. We celebrated 11 weddings in the parish during the year and we sadly farewelled 17 of our friends into life everlasting.

In this last edition in 2023 of the St Pat's Newsletter, we thank Father Tom for his leadership and wish everyone a happy, peaceful and holy Christmas. The Communication team hopes you enjoy this edition and we look forward next year to a newsletter with a new name and more reports of what's happening in our wonderful parish.

## Around our Parish

On 17<sup>th</sup> October at Bingo we celebrated Marcello Grego's 97<sup>th</sup> birthday. Marcello has been coming to Bingo since 2004 but has had a short absence to look after his wife, Elvira, who sadly passed away recently. After a little encouragement Marcello has now returned to the Bingo group on Mondays taken very kindly by Denise Norman. He was very happy to celebrate his birthday with his many Bingo friends with a birthday cake, a pizza lunch and champagne.



**Happy Birthday Marcello and God bless you.**

Anne Manenti

## Christmas Craft Workshop "Box of Hope"

SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER 10.00AM | PARISH HALL

Come join us for a fun Christmas Craft workshop to make your own Box of Hope filled with origami stars to keep for the season of Advent or to give to a friend or family member who might need a little bit of Hope this Christmas.

All materials will be provided at the workshop.

Hope to see you there!



# Jesuit Social Service Food Drive

Once more the generosity of St Patrick's Parish outshone itself. Parishioners willingly availed themselves of the provided black shopping bags and went shopping, not for themselves but to support the people in some parts of Sydney unable to buy food for their families. The return of the grocery bags full to the



brim and in many cases overflowing was exceptional. The drive was completed on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September when several truckloads were collected. Once more the shelves of the Jesuit Ignite Food Store were full. Thanks were given to St Pat's from Rose, Lisa and Claire from the Jesuit Social Services Western Sydney Team.



## Faith Ministries at St Pat's

The Faith Education Ministry has been an important part of St Pat's Parish for many years. It has a wide scope of activities which includes Adult Faith Education, where we provide presentations and topics of interest and information to our parishioners. The current seven-week presentation by member Hana Smit on our Salvation History Story is an example of this.

Then there's First Sacrament Preparation, another focal part of our ministry where this year we prepared 56 children for First Reconciliation, 63 for First Holy Communion and 38 Confirmed, this year by Archbishop Anthony Fisher.

Our 12 Catechists and Assistants provide weekly scripture lessons to the Catholic Students at Mortlake

Primary School. In addition we have an RCIA team which provides instruction and assistance to adults who are interested in joining the Catholic Faith. The Children's Liturgy at weekend Masses and Baptismal Preparation are also part of our Faith Education Ministry. As can be seen, there are many areas to be covered, which all assist Fr Tom. We are very keen to involve interested parishioners to become part of one or more of the above areas of our ministry. If you are interested in becoming involved, please contact Bob Mayor on 0418 228689 or email at: [mayer2411@gmail.com](mailto:mayer2411@gmail.com).

We the parishioners at St Pat's are very grateful for the invaluable work of the Faith Education Ministry. Many thanks Bob and your assistants.

## Youth Mass

St Patrick's is excited to announce that on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month, we will be hosting a 'Youth Mass' – a Mass where all the youth in our parish are invited to celebrate and join in prayer together.

Mass will start at 6pm and following, everyone will be invited to gather in the parish hall to share a quick pizza and a drink and just chat and get to know one another. Our aim is to have regular groups of people attend these Masses so we can start to create a casual 'St Patrick's Youth Group'.

Lock in the last Sunday of every month and let others who might be interested know! Bring along a friend, bring along a family member – whether they are or aren't regulars at St Patrick's – everyone is invited! Hope to see you there!

Bianca Piccin





# Pets Take Over St Pat's



I want to tell you about something super special that happened in our Parish on Sunday, 15 October : The blessing of animals. And guess what? It's all inspired by the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals.

You see, St. Francis was a real lover of nature. He believed that all creatures, great and small, were gifts from God and deserved our care and love. He even used to talk to the birds, and they'd chirp back to him! Isn't that amazing?

So, every year around October 4th, which is the feast day of St. Francis, St. Patrick's Mortlake Parish organizes a special event where we bring our pets for a blessing. Dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, lizards, etc. – they're all welcome! It's a bit like a pet parade, and it's heaps of fun.

The church parklands was filled with pets, and Father Tom led the blessing ceremony. He talked about how animals make our lives better, and how we should take care of them, just like St. Francis did.

When it was time for the actual blessing, Father Tom sprinkled holy water on all the animals, saying a special prayer for each one. My dog George and my bearded dragon Chewie are now blessed until their next shower with the blessed holy water.

So, if you ever get a chance to attend a Catholic blessing of animals, I say go for it! It's a fantastic way to honour the teachings of St. Francis, celebrate our beloved pets, and show them just how much we love them.

Maria Zegarro Age 11





# Taste of the Orient

On Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October, the Orient came to our little Parish at Mortlake! For this event, we really wanted to offer a taste of the Orient to our community by bringing in cultural foods and entertainment that we would be familiar with but also a little something different! So as our guests stepped through the Bamboo gates and under our Cherry Blossom archway, we transported them to what we hoped would give them a little taste of what that amazing part of the world had to offer in tastes, sights and sounds!

Our market place was buzzing all night as was our Kids' Zone as our tastebuds were dancing with flavours from Japan, China, Hong Kong and Thailand! We also had our parish's own Oriental burger creation! For those who did not get to taste this, it featured a Vietnamese NemNuong mince patty sandwiched between a Japanese kewpie mayo and sriracha sauce – we were all amazed at how good this combo worked together!

There were also the visual delights of a Thai traditional dance, Korean fan dance and KPOP too as well as the mesmerising sounds of the Taiko drum performance! The Lions even came out to dance as they moved through the crowds to meet the children after their Stage performance!

A special mention also needs to go to our volunteers who worked through the event - without you, our event would not have run as smoothly as it did. Thank you for giving us your time and helping us make it an enjoyable night for everyone who came!

Many thanks to the committee for working so hard on this event in the months prior and to Fr Tom for his support throughout.

We look forward to bringing you our final Twilight Event of the year – An Italian Christmas Festival! Friday 8 December.

Stephanie Tse

## Volunteering Creates A Sense of Belonging

Amidst a kaleidoscope of hanging lanterns, the rhythmic beats of festive drums, and the scent of exotic cuisine, 'The Taste of the Orient' Night in October unfolded as a wonderful celebration in the heart of our joy-filled Parish. This event, a harmonious fusion of music and gastronomy, offered a privileged opportunity for my children and me to step into the role of volunteers.

Wearing our lanyards, we took up our assigned positions, immersing ourselves in the vibrant tapestry of the festivities. It wasn't just about being present, it was about actively contributing to the ambiance and fostering a sense of belonging. The involvement of adaptable volunteers, honing their skills in teamwork, mastering the intricacies of money handling and EFT-POS machines, selling raffle tickets, overseeing the Kids' Zone, and guiding visitors to actively make a positive contribution was inspiring.

Beyond the surface of fun and entertainment, it was a night to celebrate social networks and cherish the warmth of familiar faces.

The experience of volunteering alongside my children served as a reminder of the intrinsic importance of community. We felt gratitude for the dedication of the organising team, who for months, worked tirelessly behind-the-scenes.

Volunteering became more than an act of giving back; it evolved into a joyous blend of community service and fun. We eagerly anticipate future events, a testament to the power of collective effort in creating memorable experiences.

Bernadette, Elisabeth, and Benjamin





As the year 2023 draws to a close, we have been really thankful for a school year that has provided so many varied opportunities for all our children. We have been so blessed to be part of this wonderful community here, at St Pat's enjoying Family Masses and all the special parish events across the year.



This year has actually seen our very original Kindergarten children, initially enrolled in the motor mechanics garage down the end of Herbert Street, arrive in Year 6. They have all grown and matured into beautiful students and we will miss their thoughtful and caring natures, especially with their buddies in Year 1. It is wonderful to see these children move through the grades and their Sacraments, and we hope the Gift of the Holy Spirit keeps them strong in their future years.

We recently welcomed our new Kindergarten children for 2024, and we look forward to having the children

with us next year. We also look forward to seeing the beginning of the building of our last classrooms, a large multi-purpose/library space, as well as a mini auditorium and practice rooms.



We 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.

Amanda Westgate  
Principal



**Italian Christmas Festival**  
Friday 8th December  
5pm to 8pm  
Hosted on Parish Grounds  
33 Gale Street, Mortlake

Live Entertainment  
Food Trucks • Market Stalls  
Santa • Kids Zone • Raffle

*Festa dell'Immacolata Concezione!*

Supported by:  

If you would like to host a stall at the event, please contact [twilight@stpatmortlake.org.au](mailto:twilight@stpatmortlake.org.au) or to volunteer, email [volunteers@stpatmortlake.org.au](mailto:volunteers@stpatmortlake.org.au)

Wishing you all a  
Happy and Safe  
Christmas, from the  
Communications Ministry

JESUS  
is the  
REASON  
for the  
SEASON




**Children's Christmas Liturgy**  
**THE NATIVITY STORY**  
re-enacted by our parish children!  
PERFORMED ON THE PARISH GREEN  
THURSDAY 14TH DECEMBER 5.30PM

Our Annual Children's Christmas Liturgy is a special evening for all to celebrate the meaning of Christmas with our local community. Enjoy a casual evening of the nativity story come-to-life performed by our parish children and singing of Christmas Carols followed by a parish BBQ.

If your child would like to participate in the event, please register using the form by COB Friday 17th November 2023.

The form can be accessed by going to <https://forms.gle/yCcWcWak5f4Co6m7> or by scanning the QR code below. Thank you!


