

Christmas – God With Us

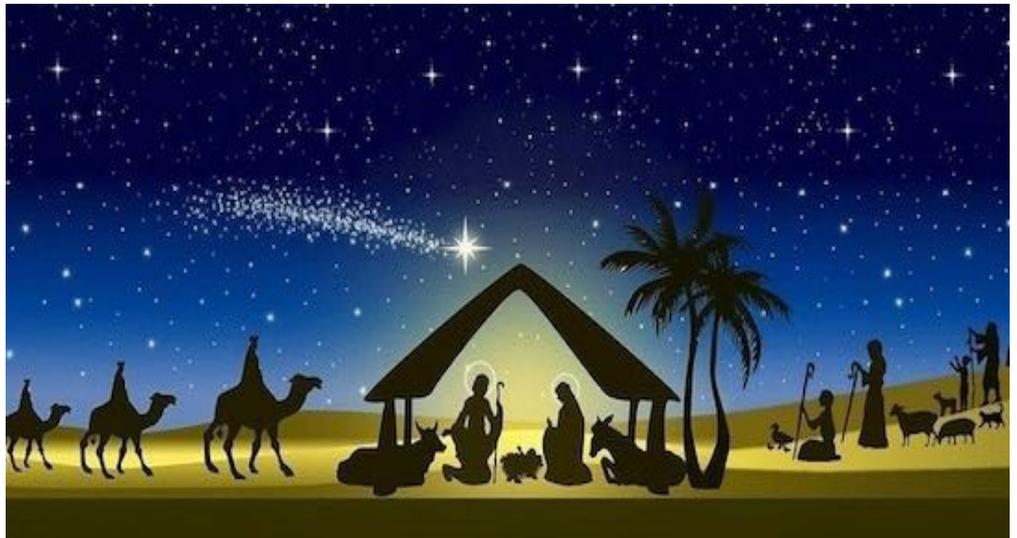
Christmas is about the mystery of the divine found *within* the human ~ GOD entering our everyday life! Because Jesus Christ was born into our world in a normal human way, all our ordinary human activities are made holy. This is what we refer to as the mystery of the Incarnation—Jesus becoming man. Jesus Christ has entered our story and saved us from the darkness! Imagine if we were to live always as if walking in the light!

The word *Christmas* grew from the Old English *Christes messe* meaning the Mass of Christ. There is no historical evidence to confirm that Jesus was in fact born on December 25. People began celebrating his birth at the time of the Northern hemisphere Winter Solstice. The symbol of Christ as the *light of the world* is quite literally experienced in the North. After the Winter Solstice (the shortest day of the year) the light of each day grows brighter and stays longer. The darkness recedes. Warmth and colour return to the

earth. For us we need to adjust to our seasonal time of summer.

The season of Christmas extends to the feast of the Epiphany. Christmas joyously announces that God is within reach of us all through Jesus. The poignant symbol of the stable of the birth is a wondrous

manifestation of God's total commitment to the human condition. Shepherds, the Magi, the flight into Egypt are other chapters in the Christmas story.



Fr Martin's Reflection

Although it was over 26 years ago I vividly remember the first occasion I was invited to minister the sacrament of anointing of the sick. After ordination it was customary for newly ordained priests from Corpus Christi College to engage in a period of hospital chaplaincy. On my first



Fr Martin Cruickshank, Parish Priest
in blue vestments from Jerusalem

night at St John of God Hospital, Ballarat I was awakened in the dark of night by the sound of the medical beeper. I answered the page and bleary eyed and very nervous I entered the Intensive Care unit. Lying on the trolley before me was a middle aged man of strong physique – later I

was to discover a western district potato farmer and even (cont pg 2)

2 Cont pg 1 Fr Martin's Reflections ...

more fortuitously a trotting trainer/driver. He was attached to all sorts of bells and whistles, his family sombrelly gathered around his bedside. After introducing myself, I said that I would confer on him the sacrament of anointing of the sick. Even through the oxygen mask, I could see the terror in his eyes. The heart rate on the monitor rose alarmingly and gowned staff hastily appeared. Removing the mask from his face with his gnarled hand he gasped 'No thanks, Father. I'm going to get better!' His reality was that anointing had nothing to do with healing but the last rites and imminent death. On another occasion I have stood next to grieving parents as the machine keeping their son alive was turned off. Shortly afterwards, the body's breathing quietly and gently ceased and the heart rate monitor flat lined.

Without a heart beat all things will eventually die. In descriptive terms we use phrases like lion hearted, half hearted, heavy hearted, cold hearted to signify our moods or response to life situations.

Some of you would recall the ecstasy of your heart racing when you first fell in love; your heart beating with excitement on Christmas morning or on the return home of a loved one; your heart labouring after undergoing a stress test, walking up a steep incline or ascending a flight of stairs; your heart pounding as a result of a sudden shock or imminent danger, a foreboding fear; your heart in rhythmic balance during a time of contented rest. Our heart beat tells us a lot about not only our physical health but also about our state of mind and spiritual wellbeing.

In 2020 the Australian Catholic Church will hold a Plenary Council. During the time of listening and discernment we have been asked to reflect on the heart beat of our individual, communal and institutional faith. In his own inimitable style the redemptorist theologian Tony Kelly writes "The Church of our day can be likened to a beached whale. We can no longer lie inert and doomed, in a vain attempt to survive out of our element. On one hand, we cannot just lie there, hoping to get a free ride off the great institutions that were the gift of past intrepid generations. There is no clinging to the shore of some artificial identity. The challenge is to move out into the shore-less mystery of God; so to enjoy the freedom and beauty of the open ocean. This is a hard time for the church, given the hostility to traditional Christian values, the particular shame uncovered by the Royal Commission and the depressed mood of public life. Being a Catholic today is like being recruited into a

retreating army. Well, the whale may have been beached, but with each incoming tide of faith this whale can move out again into the freedom of the ocean. The church is, after all, the people of God. The way of the whale is not to beach itself in the doomed security of the shore, but return to the fathomless depths and endless expanse of the wisdom and mercy of God!

Prompted by the stirring of God's spirit may our own heart beat and that of the church be re-aligned to the call of Christ who comes so that we might enjoy life in all its fullness ❤️

PRIVILEGE TO SERVE



Ed Brown, Chairperson Parish Council

It is a privilege to be serving the Sacred Heart Parish Pastoral Council as Chairperson for the next twelve months and I sincerely hope I can strive to continue the outstanding leadership provided by Justin Clancy and help to work as part of a team to promote our Parish as a welcoming, inclusive and nourishing community.

My wife Margy and I have been a part of the Sacred Heart Parish since the beginning of 1991 when we first moved to Albury. Our eldest son Stephen was baptised here in 1994, before we moved to Finley and then Corowa, and our daughter Annie was born in Wodonga in 2003. We moved back to Albury in 2008 and have continued our connection with the parish ever since.

Margy teaches at St Patrick's Parish School in Albury (Music teacher extraordinaire) and I'm the Leader of Faith and Mission at Xavier High School. We both have the blessing of working in Catholic Education, where we have the privilege and responsibility of giving visible witness to the love of God to each student we encounter everyday.

We have just welcomed our first grandchild...a beautiful baby girl, Mabel, daughter of Stephen and his wife Paige. As people of hope, we want Mabel to have a great life to live life to the full.

PARTING WORDS TO GRADUANDS

Gavin Dykes, Principal of Xavier

As they leave our community I would like to give one last piece of advice they can take moving forward into the future. To do this I would like to use a quote from Barack Obama, also from the year 2014:



"One voice can change a room, and if one voice can change a room, then it can change a city, and if it can change a city, it can change a state, and if it change a state, it can change a nation, and if it can change a nation, it can change the world. Your voice can change the world."

As you know our school motto is 'The Truth Shall Set You Free' I would hope that in the last six years you have learnt what truth is. That sometimes truth is that lone voice in a situation, in a classroom, or a gathering of people, who speak for what is right, who is not afraid to challenge or be controversial. I know many of you have faced significant challenges on your journey through Xavier, challenges in the classroom, at home, grief and loss, sickness and poor health, but also challenges that saw you overcome great obstacles, like those just mentioned and achievements such as representing our state and/or country, visiting NASA, performing in local theatre. This ability to listen to your inner voice of truth, each and every one of you, in your own unique way, has led to the wonderful and diverse group seated here before us today. As you move to the next phase of your life beyond school, always listen to that inner voice of truth to guide you whenever you feel lost, or unsure of what's next. The truth you know will set you free. You have time on your side, there is no rush, as some people take 10, 20 or 50 years to find their ultimate place in life, but if you are true to your inner voice, then you will find peace, comfort and joy as your companions.

And I hope as you leave you have the courage to be the voice in the bigger wider world where people are often silent. Have the voice to speak up against injustice, have the courage to have the voice to speak for truth when lies, gossip, innuendo are causing damage to those around you. But most importantly have the voice to show people the beauty that exists in the world. In people around you, in their qualities and characteristics but also that the great gifts that we are given as people of God who are blessed to have this wonderful opportunity.

MUSIC MINISTRY

Catherine Cutler

2019 has been the usual busy year for the regular organ players and cantors at Sacred Heart. Apart from the weekly masses the choir convened to practice and perform at the Easter ceremonies. Rachel Bourke has been our resident IT creator and we thank her for her generosity over the years. We welcome Lyn Hamilton to the team who comes with considerable experience in the IT field. Also we welcome the return of Lachlan McIntyre to the microphone, it is a pleasure to have a young face to lead the singing. Xavier High school has also stepped up to the mark and has provided not only singers but a pianist, drummer and readers on 3 occasions this year. Mary Hunt has also enhanced our liturgy with her talented violin playing. Finally, it is a pleasure to thank the liturgy committee who set the agenda for our music, and to our trusty leader, Val Hayes, who organises us and does the lion's share of the organ playing. At Christmas we welcome any parishioners who would like to join us to help make our celebrations both prayerful and joyous.



Xavier Choir at Youth Mass 30th Nov 2019

Privilege to Serve ... Ed Brown cont pg 2

We want her to live in a world of wonder and opportunities and hope, just like the young people we teach and Pope Francis agrees..

"I want them to dream great things, to seek vast horizons, to aim higher, to take "on the world, to accept challenges and to offer the best of themselves to the building of something better." (Christ Lives)

PARISH PIONEER

Mary (Molly) Teresa Fulford, 97, has been a shining light in the parish since it began. Born on 3/1/22 in Yarraville, Victoria, she was the 3rd child of 6. She went to school at St Paul's in Coburg and left school when she was just 14 which was the go then. Her first job was in a factory making corsets. When the war broke out, Molly changed jobs and she started making bags for the "25 pounders". She met her husband, Arthur, during this time and they were married just 8 months before the war ended.

Molly and Arthur had seven children (two died in infancy). They made their home in Albury and raised Dianne, Les, Wayne, Dennis and Roy in North Albury and Lavington. They became very involved in the establishment of the Sacred Heart Parish. Arthur, being a builder, was able to be of great assistance and loaned his tools to the volunteers working on the church, school and hall. They had a very strong relationship with Fr Bon and he became a firm family friend. Fr Bon had a great sense of humour and Molly was able to give him plenty of cheek, a quality she has not lost. Arthur converted to Catholicism for Molly but she insists that she never asked him to. Arthur came from a strict Methodist background. Socially, Molly and Arthur loved ballroom dancing and 'jitterbugging' and had a lot of fun together.



Sadly, Arthur had a sudden heart attack at the young age of 48 while at work and died. Molly was left to raise the young family on her own. "We had lots of troubles" she said "but we overcame them with lots of friends, fun and laughter". Molly started to work at Woolworths Variety Shop in Dean St where she was head lady for 21 years.

"They were happy days although they were pretty hectic" she said, "especially with the shoplifters!"

Unfortunately, Molly had a stroke on 20th May 2013. After spending a few weeks in hospital she sold her home and moved into Mercy Place on 5th July 2013. Before her stroke she was still driving her car and enjoyed going to Bingo, playing bowls, knitting baby clothes and crocheting blankets for family and friends. She still enjoys reading and watching TV especially AFL football, test cricket and horse racing. Many years ago she was involved in the North Albury Football Club and also did the scoring for the New Market Cricket Club. Molly also looks forward each year to the Footy Tipping Comp and came first in the Sacred Heart Comp a few years ago. She was first at Mercy Place in 2017 and 3rd in 2019.

Molly has always studied the form guide and loves to have a punt each week – just something she can afford. "It is not an occupation for me," she said "Just an interest". But she warns parishioners not to take a tip from Fr Martin. "His horses don't run true" she said.

As to her views about the state of the church today, Molly is forthcoming. "I have always said that priests should be allowed to get married if they want to, and live a normal life. That includes 'making babies' " she said. "They should be able to express their normal physical feelings – all this abuse stuff is just not on" she said. "I live by the philosophy that you should "tell it like it is" said Molly. "I believe you should say it to a person's face. You should not hold any grudges or hate in your heart. And you should speak up - that is what I do" she said

The church is a lot more relaxed now than the church I grew up with but I miss some things like how special first communion was with white dresses and veils and also confirmation.

A dear friend and neighbour for many years when their families were growing up is Ellen Hagan, Sister Anne's mother. In 2017 they became neighbours again when Ellen moved into Mercy Place across the hall from Molly. When Molly's son, Les, passed away suddenly in Queensland on 18th Sept this year, Molly was unable to attend his funeral but she is very grateful to Sister Anne for organising a prayer booklet and service that was held in the chapel at Mercy Place at the same time as the funeral was being held in Queensland. This was a great comfort to Molly at a very sad and difficult time for her. Her thoughts are now with Sr Anne on the recent passing of her mother and the loss of her close friend.

Molly continues to live a rich and fun filled life.

ECUMENICAL MEN'S BREAKFAST

This gathering used to be referred to as The Combined Churches Men's Breakfast, with the intention of rotating the venue monthly around 5 Churches; but, as often happens, no-one could remember whose turn it was and the whole thing collapsed in a muddle of good intentions, until St James Anglican Parish revived it about two years ago. This is still the Combined Churches Breakfast – we take turns organizing, cooking and cleaning up, but it's always in the same place.

In November, we welcomed Ed Brown as guest speaker, and Ed gave us an informative and entertaining account of his leadership in Faith & Mission. It went down so well that Ed couldn't get away from the follow-up question session.



Tony Smit usually has copies of the flyer.

We look forward to seeing you 2nd Saturday of each Month from 7.45 a.m. St James is on Urana Road, and the Hall is around the back on Heriot Street. For a modest (optional) donation, you get a full breakfast with acceptable coffee, a guest speaker and you meet some interesting people.

FAMILY GROUP NEWS

The Family Group Movement was started here in North Albury in 1990. The Passionist Fathers in Sydney at Castle Hill started the movement. Fr Peter McGrath and Fr Tim Horloch were the founders. Kaye and Jim Deanshaw were the co ordinators for the parish. We started with seven family groups comprised of families with children, older couples, single people, divorced and separated people. Family Groups are a group for all people. Each group had a leader. Over time the groups have dropped off, due to different circumstances.

The idea of Family Group is we meet each month and share an outing together. It could be a picnic in the gardens, a BBQ or lunch or a week-end away. They are simple outings and people get to know each other. Our group has been going for the past thirty years next year. It is a very strong and vibrant group and we have become very close. We have shared lots of happy times and sad times. Always there to support one another.

We started off with little children who now have children of their own. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the wonderful people who have supported Family Groups over the years.

Next year on Sun 29 March at Sacred Heart Church we will celebrate Mass at 9.30am and after Mass we will have a luncheon to celebrate our thirty years. All past and present members and anyone who would like to start or belong to a group are more than welcome. Cost \$30

For more information Ph Jim 0438 253 100 or Kaye 0474 132 970

OUTREACH GROUP

Late in 2018 an Outreach Group was formed in Sacred Heart Parish. Visitation began in March 2019. The group members are Sue Betts, Margie Brown, Colleen Day, Jenny Griffiths, Fran Kernaghan, Sandra Mc Pherson, Kathy Plant, Yvonne Rosewarne, Cheryl Ryan, Peter and Judy Tuckwell. Barbara Goode is the co ordinator.

Visitations are made to bereaved families if they so wish; Parishioners who are unable to go to Mass, or those who would like a friendly face to call on them. Parishioners who reside at Mercy Place, Riverwood Nursing Home and Borella House are visited. If you wish to join the Outreach team or would like to be visited in your home, Retirement Village or Nursing home please contact the Parish Office during Office hours Ph 6025 1516



Barb Godde is a member of Parish Council and is the Co ordinator of the Outreach Group

ST ANNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

It is unbelievable to think that 2019 is coming to a close. This year at St Anne's has been another busy time with a myriad of activities being undertaken by staff and students. Some of our highlights for Term 4 include:

The Great Fete

We began Term 4 with our annual fete on Friday 18th October which was a huge success. Lucky for us, the weather was perfect for the day and our profit margin grew again. The success of our fete is due to a number of highly dedicated and committed volunteers, who deserve a massive thank you. We are incredibly fortunate to have such amazing parent helpers, who without this support, an event like our fete would not be possible.



CPS Basketball Carnival

The weekend of October 26th and 27th, St Anne's along with St Patrick's and Holy Spirit, hosted the 2019 NSW Catholic Basketball Challenge. There were over 36 schools represented and approximately 135 teams that participated from across the state. St Anne's entered 11 teams for the weekend and our Senior Girls and Junior Boys brought home the championship in Division 1, and a Senior Boys team won the championship in Division 3. Again, many people deserve a massive thank you for the time spent on organising and running such a huge event.

Catholic Missions

October was World Mission Month and this year students across Australia were encouraged to not only learn about Ghana and the work of the Church there, but to do something extraordinary for Mission through fundraising, advocacy and prayers. St Anne's celebrated and acknowledged the amazing works by Catholic Mission by having a whole school Liturgy and Hot Dog lunch to raise money. As a result we were able to raise over \$1000 for this worthy cause.

VEX Robotics

We are now into our third year of offering the VEX Robotics programme here at St Anne's. From humble beginnings in 2017, we are now enjoying many successes! This year both teams have won awards at Scrimmages and Tournaments. Because of these achievements, The VEXinators and Team Apollo will be heading to Adelaide in early December to compete at the National Finals. If successful at this competition, we may have another experience of representing Australia at the VEX Robotics World Championships in Louisville, Kentucky, USA in April next year.



Kindergarten and Year 6 Orientation

Our 2020 Kindergarten students have enjoyed several transition sessions throughout the term and an Orientation morning was held on Tuesday 19th November. We are excited to welcome them and their families to our school community.

Our Year 6 students experienced and enjoyed an Orientation day at Xavier on Thursday 21st November and we wish them every success as they begin this exciting new chapter of their lives.

Gift Giving Liturgy / Bongiorno Day

On Friday 29th November we celebrated Bongiorno Day (Red House Patron) by holding a Gift Giving Liturgy and Car Rally. The amount of gifts donated for the St Vincent de Paul Society Christmas Appeal was incredible and the generosity of our school community was again, outstanding. We acknowledge and thank the volunteers for their tireless and selfless work.

Looking Forward

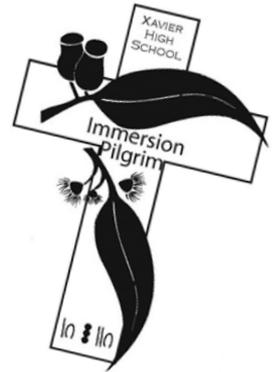
2019 has been another full, exciting and fun-filled year for us at St Anne's. We continue to be thankful for the wonderful support we receive from Fr Martin and our Parish Community. On behalf of everyone at St Anne's, we send warm wishes to everyone for a happy and holy Christmas and look forward to what 2020 has to bring.

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

At Xavier, there are two initiatives which are cause for great hope:

The Indigenous Immersion Program

Since 2010, Xavier High School has offered to Senior Students an invitation to participate in an Immersion Program which provides them with an authentic opportunity to understand the spiritual, cultural and historical components that underpin contemporary Aboriginal Communities, by walking alongside the people they visit. As a Catholic faith community, we see this experience as part of our shared responsibility to all humanity to help foster opportunities for our students to become open-minded and hearted global citizens. Our hope is that this 'pilgrimage experience' will provide our students with the knowledge and skills needed to be people of action; the future leaders who will promote and encourage change and fairness for all in our world. This year, students in Year 11 participated in one of five (5) Immersion Experiences and I was immensely proud and astonished by the extraordinary impact these students had on the communities they entered and on each other.



The Vinnies Youth Team

(part of the St Vincent de Paul Society) - provides students with an opportunity to get actively involved in reaching out and supporting the less fortunate in our community and beyond. Students aim to 'make a difference', and practice compassion, justice and charity. The aim of the Vinnies Youth Team is to help to build a more just society. Some of the exciting projects which they get involved in include:

- cooking for and supporting the work of Carevan
- connecting with students in our Aspect school
- supporting the Vinnies Winter Appeal
- organising elements of the RU OK Day
- co ordinating the annual Gift Giving/Christmas Appeal
- participating in opportunities for faith formation and reflection

From **Jasmine Gordes:**

"Hi my name is Jasmine. When I first started coming to Mass at Sacred Heart, Father Kevin used to give me special jobs to do to help him get ready for Mass like lighting the candles. Following my Communion I was excited to become an Altar server so I could participate in the Mass and help Father Kevin. I served as an Altar girl for over four and a half years before I retired earlier this year when I started high school. I enjoyed participating in the Mass so I volunteered to commentate and read. I really enjoy taking part in the Mass and I am growing more confident each time. The congregation have been very positive and encouraging. Thank you"

From **Xavier Clancy:**

"I like being an altar server because I can spend more time with Fr Martin and I can increase my passion for God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit."



**Fr Bernie Thomas with his young helpers
Jasmine Gordes and Xavier Clancy**

From **Alicia Spiers:** *"I wanted to be more involved in the Mass; to assist the priest and to work with my friend (Jasmine)"*



From **Brigita Serbinek** *"It gives me a chance to serve God"*





Coming to Sacred Heart Parish 2020

Alpha is a series of sessions exploring the Christian faith.

Each talk looks at a different question around faith and is designed to create conversation.

Alpha is run all around the globe, and everyone's welcome. It runs in cafés, churches, universities, homes – you name it. No two Alphas look the same, but generally they have **THREE** key things in common: **FOOD, a TALK and GOOD CONVERSATION!**

Want to learn more about ALPHA? .. Website: alpha.org.au/catholic

NO FEE!

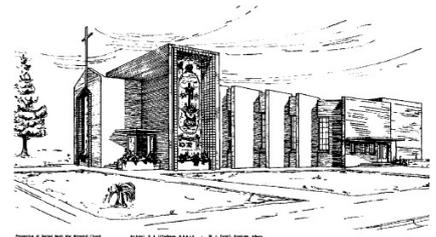
NO COMMITMENT!

NO FOLLOW-UP!



Sacred Heart Strategic Plan

To be a place that allows individuals to grow in faith as part of a welcoming community where each person feels welcomed



Goals

1. Drive engagement – both within our Parish community and those who are outside of the Parish community
2. Consider the diverse breadth of ways of expressing faith
3. Renew liturgical and parish structures and procedures

In the Park

By Colin Timmins
(former Centacare Board Member)

In the park
beside the river
I gave myself to the simple
art of knowing myself
as I am.

From one tree to the other
I followed

the course of my mind
giving myself to myself
as the river flowed by.

The dreams of my mind
I too followed
my in's
and my out's.

I gave myself
to the simple art
of knowing myself

Strategies

Driving Engagement: Inclusion of children and youth within the parish
Ecumenical Events
Encouraging parishioners to meet other parishioners
Facilitating school connections
Connecting with families following baptisms
Outreach and welfare services to the community

Providing a breadth of ways to nurture & express faith

1. Faith Groups – meditation, prayer & scripture
2. Plenary Council
3. Resources – Online, physical (Library)

Renewal of parish structures/liturgy
Review of PPC Constitution
Review of finance, buildings and infrastructure
Review of volunteer base eg paying for cleaning
Review of communications e.g. PPC to parish
Review of Liturgy

Measures

1. Trial children's Liturgy weekly through Lent 2019
2. Youth Mass per term
3. Acknowledge participants & helpers through bulletin
4. Art work from School Students for pews through Lent 2019
5. Social committee convened with 2 social events in 2019
6. 2 ecumenical events in 2019

1. Advent resources – booklets 2018
2. Plenary Council activities 2018-19
3. Faith experiences – Alpha program

Update website by June 2019
Renewal PPC by June 2019
Develop budget and capital expenditure plan
Develop Parish Structure PPC/
Finance Committee

*Christmas
Blessings*