

Heartbeat

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE FAMILY OF SACRED HEART PARISH

Fr Martin's Christmas Reflection



In his classic text 'Life of the Beloved' Henri Nouwen writes:

More important than our talents are our gifts. We may have only a few talents, but we have many gifts. Our gifts are the many ways in which we express our humanity. They are part of who we are: **friendship, kindness, patience, joy, peace, forgiveness, gentleness, love, hope, trust**, and many others.

These are the true gifts we have to offer to each other. In this book, Henri invites us to consider that we, too, are precious in God's sight. So much changes when we do. We become more interested in **being** rather than in **doing**; we bind our wounds rather than run from what causes us pain; we acknowledge our frailties rather than deny them. Consequently, Henri found a new capacity for joy. By claiming his belovedness - he had more compassion for people who hurt him, more courage to see his struggles as gateways to inner freedom.

He became more loving and felt more at peace with himself and the world.

What are the gifts that your relationship with God has awakened within you during the journey of 2022?

During the Christmas season, how might you enable and empower another to share their giftedness?

Once again, may the inbreaking of God's word in the form of a tiny, fragile baby restore peace to our world, rekindle vibrancy within our faith and gift tangible hope to our lives.

Fr Martin
Parish Priest
Sacred Heart Parish North Albury



Christmas Blessings from the Sacred Heart Parish Pastoral Council

On behalf of all members of our Sacred Heart Parish Pastoral Council, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone in our faith community who has continued to help make our parish a **'more welcoming and inclusive community'** this year. Every year presents us with joys and struggles and 2022 has been no different. As a community, we are called to be people of **faith, hope and love** and to bring the good news to others. Fr Martin has continued to support us in this mission by his inspiring leadership and guidance – we are truly blessed to have a Parish Priest who openly encourages 'synodality'.

This Christmas Season, may we continue to celebrate that Christ is truly present in the people of God here at Sacred Heart Parish North Albury, as we strive to build 'the Kingdom of God' and be 'leaven' for the world.

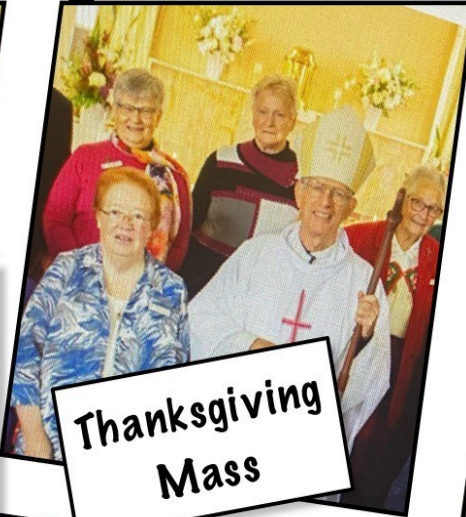
Christmas is about spending time with family and loved ones and celebrating plenty of family traditions. It may also be an opportunity to start new traditions. My family has traditionally enjoyed a **Frozen Christmas Pudding** after a traditional hot Christmas lunch and we love it. It's the perfect way to finish Christmas lunch. My mum's (Margaret)'s recipe is on pg 5 and I'm certain you'll love it.

Ed Brown
Chairperson
Sacred Heart Parish Pastoral Council
Christmas 2022

Our Parish Our People 2022



Georgia Ward (Citizen of the Year) and Muireann Kilroy (Sportsperson of the Year)



Thanksgiving Mass



Cathy Nyhan organising gifts for Vinnes



Immersion



Jimmy McLaurin's Baptism



Pastor Darren Wighton - First Nations' Mass

FIRST CATHOLIC ALPHA CONFERENCE

Fran and Michael attended the first national Alpha conference for Catholics held in Brisbane in November. Titled **“Revive and Thrive”**, we ensured we arrived early to attend the pre-conference dinner held in Southbank, to meet Alpha teams face to face and to network and socialise before we got down to work! We already pondered where the Holy Spirit was taking us while at dinner the head of Alpha Australia sat with us along with the Catholic team contact for W.A., S.A., and Vic! We got some more great ideas on how to run the Alpha program while we impressed Alpha leadership with the outstanding success of our first Parish wide Alpha considering the smaller size parish that Sacred Heart is!

Day 1 was about revival for us personally and as team members in leading and facilitating Alpha. Firstly, speakers orientated us in the Alpha Australia organisation stating that Australia is the only country to have 6 Catholics on the National team. Further, 750 000 people have attended Alpha so far nationally and the program has just been launched into the Chinese community in Mandarin with a significant uptake compared to just using subtitles. Also, videos with Australian content are currently being addressed. The mission of Alpha in evangelisation is for newcomers to belong first, then believe, then behave!

Cheerful Alpha volunteers, Cansas and Leanne Michael



Recent surveys revealed that 1 in 4 Australians would come to Church if they were asked, 70% of Australians state they pray with the most common prayer being “God help me”, and of the 5 million Catholics in Australia, 1 million practice. While 47% claim they never discuss their faith with friends and 46% only occasionally, 7% do discuss their faith regularly and openly! Of registered parishioners 6.4% do 80% of the volunteering, and 6.0% of registered parishioners give 80% of the income.

Whilst these figures may be obvious, depressing, or challenging, historically the Church always goes through renewal after pandemics! It was said that we are currently in a paradigm shift with the Kodak film company used as an example. Kodak was actually the first developer of the digital camera (yes, a story before smart phones!), but while wanting to remain “pure to its production of film, decided against rolling out the digital camera it invented. Kodak no longer exists!! So, if you are wondering how to invite someone to Church or Alpha, firstly you could ask, “would you like to come to Alpha?”. Would you like to come to Church? Saying no is ok. How do we answer that; “Is that no for now or forever? I just didn’t want to leave you out.”



Alpha participants, Fran, Margy and Jo

Day 2 was a day of workshops on informing us of different techniques for running Alpha and evangelising from our parishes. Fr Chris Ryan from the Missionaries of God’s Love who took the World Youth Day cross around Australia for WYD Sydney, spoke on missionary leadership in the Church. Firstly, Fr Chris pointed out that you can lead and not have a title, therefore everyone is a missionary leader. Of course, Alpha is an excellent tool for evangelising he said and we have all been called to contribute to the renewal of the Church quoting John 21: 17; *...if you love me, feed my sheep.*

After having attended the conference and through the overwhelming support of our parish for the Alpha program this year, we are very excited about what next year’s Alpha will bring. We will be focusing on a greater presence in the schools with a combined parish and schools’ program with planning already well underway! So please continue to pray for Alpha and the fruits it will bring to our parish while considering who you may invite or bring to Alpha in 2023! We wish you a Blessed Christmas and new year. Fran and Michael

ORGAN DONATION - a personal journey

BACKGROUND

My husband, was a committed Catholic. **Peter's view was that when you go to God, your soul must be intact – to him that meant ALL body parts intact; and no cremation!** I had to respect his ideology regarding post-death and his refusal to accept post Vatican 2 updates of the Catholic Church that included acceptance of cremation and organ donation.

MY HUSBAND'S FINAL DAYS

Peter at 60, had a major 3rd blood clot that resulted in a brain aneurism; The immediate pressure from the hospital was for me to agree to organ donation. **Once I made the informed decision to 'turn off life support' AND NO TO ORGAN DONATION, he was pronounced dead within 20 minutes.**

Six months later, when contacted as part of a research project sponsored by Royal Hobart Hospital where Peter had died; during a 40 minute phone interview, the researcher asked how the importance of organ donation could be spread across communities across Australia; my suggestion was advertising and/or publishing articles such as in Church publications as Heartbeat.



At the end the researcher revealed that **of ALL the people interviewed for the research study, I was the only person, who denied organ donation, who would speak with her!** I was fully aware of what my husband wanted; I could have agreed to organ donation [I am a registered organ donor]; but could not do it!

I recommend the brochure to be found at this web site as a starting point for this issue -Australian Government Tissue Authority www.donatelife.gov.au

Lyn Hamilton
Sacred Heart Parishioner

TREND STATISTICS

Since the national program first began in 2009, more than 15,500 people have received life-saving organ transplants from 5,450 deceased organ donors

While the majority of Australian support organ and tissue donation, only around one in three (36%) are registered to be a donor

There are currently around 1,750 Australians on the waitlist for an organ transplant

A RANDOM ACT OF CHRISTMAS KINDNESS

Last night I took our collection of recyclable bottles and cans to the depot. Being inexperienced, I was clumsy. A young man arrived and filled several shopping trolleys with his collection. He began to rapidly feed them into the machine, like a true professional and accrued over \$100 in



the time it took me to get vouchers for \$10. We both went to the supermarket to cash our vouchers and it was then that I witnessed a heart-warming act of kindness.

An old man who was obviously down on his luck, came to the register beside us. He put through a small bag of groceries,

but when he paid for them, the assistant said "I'm sorry Sir. Your card has been

declined." The man was crestfallen. The young man beside me responded spontaneously. He said "I will pay for the groceries. Take the money you need out of my voucher."

Without questioning this, the assistant took the voucher and put the groceries through. She simply said "Thank you!" The old man was quite confused about what happened. The young man just shook his hand and said "Merry Christmas". When it was my turn to be served, I asked the assistant if she had known the young man. She said "Yes. I've known him all his life. When he was a child he was very sick. When I get off my shift I am going to text his mother and tell her what he did. He is a very good person".

CULTURAL SNAPSHOT

One of the initiatives of the Parish Pastoral Council this year was to celebrate the cultural diversity of our Sacred Heart Parish community. But are we culturally diverse? To find this out, the Council undertook a survey over two weeks in November. The results are as follows:

No of Surveys returned with meaningful data i.e. could be recorded	53
No of people attending Mass at Sacred Heart (2021 Mass attendance report)	~ 250
% surveys returned	~ 20%
Ancestry: No of Parents born outside Australia	17 (32%)
Cultural identity (persons)	
Australian Indian	1
Australian Filipino	3
Australian Polish	1
Kiwi/Dutch	1
French	1
Zimbabwean	1
Irish/Scottish/English	10
Australian	28
N/A	7
Total surveys returned	53

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data from 2021 reveals that at that time 29.1% of the population was born overseas. Locally, while this figure may be reflected in our parents' generation, it does not appear to be reflected in our current community, especially since 20% of the population of Albury Wodonga who have arrived in the last five years, were born overseas. In terms of culture, they are not attending Mass at Sacred Heart. Our community does not appear to be diverse. The survey also asked people to indicate if they would like to be involved in celebrating cultural diversity which includes our indigenous community and approx. 50% indicated they would like to be involved. If you would like to add your name to the list, please contact the Parish office on Ph 6025 1516.



Ed's Mum's Famous Frozen Christmas Pudding Recipe



Ingredients

120 grams of slivered almonds
 200 grams raisins
 200 grams sultanas
 1 dessertspoon of mixed spice
 1 dessertspoon of brandy
 1 teaspoon of cinnamon
 1 teaspoons of nutmeg
 200 grams of icing sugar
 100 grams of premium dark cooking chocolate
 600 mls of thickened cream
 4 egg whites
 1 block of premium dark cooking chocolate

Method

Line two pudding bowls with foil
 Toast slivered almonds in a moderate oven until golden (approx 5 mins)
 Mix together the raisins, sultanas and the add cinnamon, nutmeg, mixed spice and toasted slivered almonds
 Stir through the brandy
 Cover the mixture with cling wrap and allow to soak
 Melt 100 grams of chocolate using a double saucepan
 Meanwhile, beat eggs whites until firm and glossy
 Then beat cream and beat in sugar
 Blend cream, sugar and egg whites together
 Fold melted chocolate through the cream mixture
 Add the soaked fruits and fold through the mixture
 Pour mixture evenly into the two pudding bowls
 Cover each bowl in cling wrap and leave in freezer overnight
 When ready to serve, melt the block of chocolate in a double saucepan
 Use a hot knife to remove the frozen pudding from the bowl and place on serving plates
 Use the hot knife to spread the melted chocolate mixture evenly over the frozen puddings.
 Then place the frozen puddings back in the freezer to set the chocolate. ENJOY!!!

Learning for life - *doing little things with love*

Mother Theresa offers a humble pathway to success by saying ***"In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love."***

There is a sense of clarity that is afforded in this statement and it is shared by other saints who achieved unimaginable feats of kindness and charity such as St Francis Xavier, the patron saint of our school. On the recent feast day of St Francis, our school celebrated with the theme ***'be great in little things'*** another quote on simplicity that highlights an attainable path that allows us to give glory to God.

In reflection of 2022, our students have achieved a plethora of small things with great love, and this was our aim, some of which I would like to highlight in order to demonstrate how glorious our year has been.

In our last article we mentioned the strong start to our year with the **Year 12 Retreat** and **Year 7 Camp** - the bookends of our Faith Formation program.



Donating to St. Vincent de Paul North Albury

It is without a doubt that these opportunities and events see our students continue to grow in their understanding of what it means to go to Xavier, and to thrive as **Courageous, Challenged, Collaborative, Compassionate** and **Christ-like** members of our faith community. This strong start continued throughout the remainder of the year with our relationship with the Sacred Heart Parish growing with the inclusion of a Term 2 **Year 7 Youth Mass**, where we introduced our new members of the Xavier community to the Parish. This event will now be an annual event that we will all look forward to.

Then there was the **Immersion Program**. Since 2010, Xavier High School has offered to Senior Students an invitation to participate in this 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 First Nations peoples they visit.

Forty Year 11 Students' applications were accepted and divided into two teams - one visiting Moree/Dubbo and the other Lake Mungo. With over nine months in the planning, the seven day experience was life changing.

"The Immersion Program not only breached my expectations on the spirituality awakening being able to have a broader understanding of the First Nations culture, but also allowed me to know on a deeper level the life stories of my peers I sit in class with everyday"

Karly Thomas - Mungo



Hand-made skateboards donated as a part of the Christmas Appeal

It also provided an opportunity to collaborate with an initiative of the Sacred Heart Parish Pastoral Council to celebrate a First Nations Peoples Mass which was used as a vehicle to commission the pilgrims (staff and students) who were participating in the Immersion Program.



Class of 2022 Graduation evening

XAVIER HIGH SCHOOL

Our whole **School Masses and Liturgies** continued throughout the year with themes of **'Voices of Change'** and **"Do little things Great"**. This also included a beautiful Graduation Liturgy as part of the ceremony which took place in our new St Francis Xavier Stadium. Year 12 students took the opportunity to create and design their final liturgy which was a celebration of their faith journey here at Xavier.

Our staff also continued to be a light for others. Over a dozen staff members were directly involved in the local Sacred Heart **Alpha program**. We also conducted two **Twilight Spirituality Sessions** after school focusing on why our faith calls us to serve our community, followed by putting our faith into action by doing workshops designed to facilitate acts of service for Caravan and the St Vincent De Paul Society.



Xavier Choir on stage for the Gift Giving Mass

Finally, the last two weeks were action packed and saw us celebrate **'Xavier Day'** with Mass and games. Our students took the time to learn about our Patron Saint and created artworks and participated in activities designed to educate them on his history.

Then there was our big finish. Our **Gift Giving Mass** on the last day for students was the culmination and celebration of our St Vinnies Christmas Appeal. A fundraising initiative we conducted throughout Term 4 where all 32 homerooms created a hamper each of food and decorations for families in our local community. These Hampers also included handmade gifts from our staff which were created on our Twilight night. These were wooden carved candle holders as table decorations and over 125



Commissioning Immersion Program participants at the Sacred Heart First Nations Peoples Mass

handmade Christmas cards. Furthermore, a group of staff with the support of a local skate store, Timmy G's, made nine skateboards from scratch to include with the Hampers.

As St Vincent de Paul president Peter Burgess, who attended the Gift Giving Mass mentioned, there is something going on here at Xavier, a joy and energy in the students that you cannot quite put your finger on. Our North Albury St Vincent De Paul recipients of the gifts were also taken aback with the generosity shown by the Xavier Community and it was a great way to finish the year. We donated a further \$400 worth of gift cards to local stores as gifts for kids between 12 - 16 years as well as a cash donation of \$500.

Once again it was something small that was done with love - something simple that was done well or even great. That is what we are all about here at Xavier, teaching our students to do the little things and be a part of a Catholic faith community. These experiences are provided as part of our shared



2022 Immersion Program smoking ceremony

responsibility to all humanity to help foster opportunities for our students to become more open-minded and hearted global citizens. It is the little things that we did so well this year that made it glorious to be a part of the Xavier family in 2022.

From our family to yours, we wish you a merry Christmas and a happy holiday. You can always follow us on social media to see what we are up to. Please be in contact with the school for any feedback or suggestions on how we can continue to live with mercy in our community.

Yours in Catholic Education

HEATH NEVILLE

Director of Faith Formation and Mission
Xavier High School, Albury



2022 Xavier School Captains Eli and Angelina



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XAVIER
HIGH SCHOOL ALBURY

ST ANNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

Students have experienced educational and fun filled activities throughout Term 4, with countless learning and sporting activities offered for our students. Some of our highlights include:

Staff Spirituality Day

Faith formation is important to our staff and we began Term 4 with a Spirituality Day titled *"Continuing our Missionary Journey to Transform Lives"*. Topics included Blessings, Mission, Spiritual Well-being, Evangelisation and Religious Education and our role in a Catholic School. We especially thank Fr Martin and Sr Anne for all their work in leading us in this experience.

Year 5 Excursion

Year 5 students embarked on an excursion to Sovereign Hill in Ballarat to support their unit of work on Gold. Students thoroughly enjoyed gold panning, mine tours, gold pouring demonstration, dressing up and role playing, and exploring all that Sovereign Hill has to offer. Students also experienced 'Aura', a spectacular sound and light show which followed the journey of gold from Dreamtime through to one of Australia's most important rebellions.

Sporting Events

Some of the sporting events on offer for students this term included:

📌 **House Cup** – Students in Years 3-6 were involved in a round robin style of different sporting activities that motivated and challenged many. A massive thank you to Mr Chris Lewis for organising, and to staff and students for refereeing, scoring and competing.



📌 **Infants Athletics Carnival** – Luckily the weather favoured us so the students in K-2 could enjoy an Athletics carnival in the sunshine. Lots of fun was had and many students received participation ribbons for wonderful sportsmanship and trying their best.

📌 **Infant Swimming Program** – Students in Years K-2 were given the opportunity for an intensive swimming program in the second last week of the school year.

Kinder and Year 5 & 6 Orientation

Our 2023 Kindergarten students were able to enjoy several transition sessions over recent weeks and we are very excited to welcome them and their families to our school community.

Our Year 5 and 6 students experienced and enjoyed an Orientation day at Xavier and we wish our Year 6 graduating students every success as they begin this exciting new chapter of their lives.

Gift Giving (St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal) / Bongiorno Day

On Friday 2nd December, we celebrated Bongiorno Day (our Red House Patron) by holding a Gift Giving Liturgy and having a peer support trivia contest. The amount of gifts that were 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 St Vincent de Paul volunteers and workers, for their tireless and selfless work, ensuring children and families have something to celebrate this Christmas.



Class Assemblies

Now that the Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted, we welcomed back our parents and families through class assemblies. Students enjoyed performing and showcasing their work and talents and we thank the class teachers for all their work in making this happen.

Socktober cultivates the passion of students to rise up, engage with one another and take action against poverty. It provided students with the opportunity to lead in mission, encouraging them to think not only of what they will do to help, but why they will do it. Students were invited to wear coloured clothes and/or 'crazy' socks for a gold coin donation to support this worthy charity led by Catholic Mission.

Year 4 First Holy Communion

Our Year 4 students finally got to celebrate the Sacrament of First Holy Communion in October.

On behalf of everyone at St Anne's, we wish joy to your world and peace to your heart this Christmas, and wish you much happiness in 2023.