

THE APOSTLE

57 CENTRAL ROAD BLACKBURN 3130

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Feast of the Assumption 15th August

Parish people

Welcome to the new members of our Parish Family

Lylah Coco Pekic daughter of Ostoja and Adriana
Michael Patrick Mowery son of David and Katharine
Emma Victoria Mowery daughter of David and Katharine
John Christopher Mowery son of David and Katharine
Inez Gracie Sheeran daughter of Patrick and Katherine
Oliver James Hoodless son of Warren and Genevieve

Peter Ward

Barrister Peter Ward has been a St Thomas' parishioner since he was eight years old. Under the title "The Marvelous Tale of Mr. Average", he was recently featured in the Law Institute Journal. His rise to being one of the foremost criminal lawyers in Melbourne is remarkable in that he has a congenital eye defect which restricts his vision to 10% in each eye.

Upon graduation from Monash University, Peter posted forty job applications, all disclosing his vision impairment but failed to land a single interview. But leading criminal lawyer Frank Galbally gave him a chance and, after twelve months serving his articles, Peter was asked to join the prestigious law firm. **"If you have a disability, you tend to be very determined and that helped me because I think in the early days it was a very nervous beginning as I had a responsibility to carry on the firm's name."** He was made a partner in Galbally and O'Bryan in 1989.

In a busy career which has included defending some of Melbourne's most colourful characters, Peter and his wife Libby have been valuable contributors to St Thomas'. Their children Justin, Prue, Amanda and Genevieve attended St Thomas' School and Peter is a past President of the St Thomas' Education Board. In the seventies and eighties, he often stepped in to comper the Parish Fete and other Parish events.

Apart from his visual disability, Peter has had to overcome a very serious handicap; he is a Hawthorn supporter. But, as he is not alone in our Parish in this pursuit, we can perhaps forgive this failing.



Obituaries

We express our sorrow on the death of the following parishioners

Patricia Alice Scottwife of Jack (dec.)
..... mother of Ray, Chris and Peter
Mary Liparimother of Julia and Beatrice



Patricia Alice Scott 6.11.1928 – 13.6.2010

Pat was born in Port Melbourne and was taught by the Brigidine nuns at **St Joseph's Parish Port Melbourne. Later she would attend Kilbride Convent School in Albert Park.** Pat was a great Basketball player and school leader according to her old school friend Pat Bertie.

Pat was a qualified stenographer and secretary. She and Jack married in 1950 and they moved to Blackburn in 1960

Pat Bertie and her late husband John caught up with Pat again when they also moved to Blackburn. They had many fond memories of Pat's theatrical ability when she starred in a number of St Thomas's Revues during the 70's Who could ever forget "Burlington Bertie", "the Fairy", her duet with Fr Brendan Hayes or the operatic version of "Madame Scottini" ?

Pat and her late husband Jack were always fully engaged in parish life and their three children Ray, Christine and Peter all attended St Thomas' School. Fetes and catering were very well supported by both Pat and Jack. Pat's many other parish activities included Mother's Club, Tennis Club, Catechist, Parish Council, Special Minister and Manager of St Thomas' Retirement Village.

Pat's great loves were her husband Jack and family (including 8 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild), socializing with her many friends, caravanning and weekends away with Jack and friends.

Pat will live on in our hearts forever. God has her in his care.

Ray Scott. (with reminiscences by Pat Bertie)

Mary Lipari 31.12.1916 -- 7.7. 2010

Mary Lipari was born on the 31st. December 1916 in Johannesburg to wealthy Indian parents. Mary was born a Muslim. However, her father arranged for her to attend a Catholic boarding school which would have a lasting influence on Mary's life.

Mary and her family moved to Cape Town in her early 20's where she met and married a young Indian man. Tragically their baby son died at 9 months. Later her daughter Julia was born but Julia's father died of TB prior to his daughter's birth. Some 3 years later, Mary was to remarry an Italian migrant Lucas Lipari and it was through him that Mary's faith grew and she became Catholic. Unfortunately this caused Mary to be ostracized by her family.

With changing family circumstances, Mary and Lucas moved to Australia to be closer to Julia and family. They moved into St Thomas' retirement village but Lucas died less than one year after their arrival. Mary eventually settled into life at the village following Lucas' death and was well known for her cooking and catering skills and her immaculate grooming. She was a terrific grandmother, providing her grandchildren with love and affection.

About 5 years ago, Mary had a stroke and was initially nursed by her family at home. Later she was admitted to St Vincent de Paul Nursing Home Box Hill where she resided until her death on the 7th July 2010.

Mary will always be remembered as having endured so much but always with a smile.





The Assumption by Murillo

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

According to the belief of Christians of the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox, and Oriental Orthodox churches and by some Anglicans, the Assumption of Mary was the bodily taking up of the Virgin Mary into Heaven at the end of her life. The Catholic Church teaches as dogma that Mary, "having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." This belief is known as the Dormition by the Orthodox. In the churches which observe it, the Assumption is a major festival, commonly celebrated on August 15. In many countries it is a Catholic Holy Day of Obligation. This doctrine was dogmatically and infallibly defined by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950. In his Apostolic Constitution Munificentissimus Deus, Pope Pius XII solemnly declared:

"By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."

Catholic theologians consider this declaration by Pius XII to be an "ex cathedra" use of Papal Infallibility. Mary's assumption is said to have been a divine gift to her as the 'Mother of God'.

According to Richard McBrien, the belief in Mary's bodily assumption seems to have taken hold in the beginning of the Sixth Century. It originated, not from biblical evidence nor even from patristic testimony, but as the conclusion of an argument from convenience or fittingness. It was "fitting" that Jesus should have rescued his mother from the corruption of the flesh and so he "must have" taken her bodily into heaven. (Catholicism p.873)

In Ludwig Ott's Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma he states that "the fact of her death is almost generally accepted by the Fathers and Theologians, and is expressly affirmed in the Liturgy of the Church". He concludes that "for Mary, death, in consequence of her freedom from original sin and from personal sin, was not a consequence of punishment of sin. However, it seems fitting that Mary's body, which was by nature mortal, should be, in conformity with that of her Divine Son, subject to the general law of death". The point of her bodily death has not been infallibly defined, and some believe that she did not die at all, but was assumed directly into Heaven. The papal decree which, according to Catholic dogma, infallibly proclaims the doctrine of the Assumption, the Apostolic Constitution Munificentissimus Deus, leaves open the question whether, in connection with her departure, Mary underwent bodily death; that is, it does not dogmatically define the point one way or the other, as shown by the words "having completed the course of her earthly life".

Thus as Pius XII's dogmatic statement leaves open the question of whether the Virgin Mary died before her assumption or whether she was assumed before death, both possibilities are allowed. The more common teaching of the early Fathers is that she did die.

John Uren

Murphy's Insight: What Is Peace?

Peace prevails when we are in harmony with ourselves, when we are in harmony with each other, and when we are in harmony with God. All combined.

Let me look briefly at the first requirement; harmony with ourselves. A first necessity for it is an **ability to accept our humanity.** By 'accepting' I mean being predominantly at ease with, in this case, our humanness.

If I take as an example of our humanness that "we cannot do every good thing" (a truism about our humanity), that means that we don't need to take on everything, that we not overdo things. For instance, children these days have many extra curricular activities, and parents would readily agree that it is unhealthy to be involved in too many things.

We also need to accept that we can't achieve radical change overnight. Change comes gradually, with effort, and with frequent falls. So, for instance, if we decide to be the best parent ever, it will take time to move toward that ideal.

The second major area of harmony with ourselves requires that we have to become emotionally comfortable and accepting of past resentments, hurts, disappointments, failures, regrets and mistakes (often through a process of long and hard reflection). We often need to pray intensely for this acceptance, think sensibly about the situation and seek and accept the counsel of genuine friends in the quest to wisely deal with them. Moving towards a forgiving and compassionate heart (for ourselves as well as for others) helps here too.

Thirdly, to achieve these great ends requires the help of God. That implies regular prayer and persevering faith.

Ultimately though, let us leave the past to the mercy of God, leave the future to the providence of God, and live the present generously and hopefully.

Fr Chris



Congratulations Fr Philip Malone : 50 years as MSC



Fr. Andrew Fennessy with Fr Peter and Fr. Philip before the Mass

Fr Philip Malone MSC celebrated fifty years as a member of the **Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at St Thomas'** with Mass at 12.30 pm on 20th June. It was good to see so many friends from various parishes, from YTU, and fellow MSCs including his brother Fr. Peter who had just returned from a long stint (11years) overseas.

The Malones came from Sydney and, because their mother died when they were young, both boys spent much of their schooling in boarding school. When they joined the priesthood, their **father said that "at least they were used to answering bells"**.

After studying Theology at Croydon Monastery (1963-66), Fr. Philip has spent most of his time teaching in one form or another in Schools and in Seminaries. In the 1990s, Fr. Philip had to exercise some pastoral versatility. While lecturing at the Late Vocations Seminary in Sydney, he was also the non-resident parish priest of Kensington where an OLSH sister served as parish administrator.

He currently lectures in Moral Theology at YTU. He also lectures at Heart of Life Spirituality Centre and ACU, acting as MSC Formator.

As well as helping out with Masses at St Thomas', he has also acted as supply at Sacred Heart Kew Parish. Fr. Andrew Fennessy, a long term friend from that parish, concelebrated the jubilee Mass with Fr Philip at St Thomas'.



The Liturgical Cake Cutting Ceremony

SAINTS

By Quentin Bailey

With the forth-coming canonization of Mother Mary McKillop it might be interesting to look at the process by which men and women have been canonized in the past. The Church notes that Saints are not 'made' but 'recognised'.

The early church was called 'the Communion of Saints' and the early Christians called all the members 'saints'. They did not think of Peter or Paul as 'Saints' in the modern sense of the word. Everyone was a disciple, so everyone was holy. (The Greek word for Saint is the same as the word for Holy).

This idea has always been present in the Creed, but with the passage of time, the concept of being a

Saint changed, and the martyrs were seen as the 'Saints'". The coming of monks and hermits, however, made for a new sort of hero, who like a martyr suffered for the faith. In the early centuries, saints were made because people came in such numbers to their shrines that bishops agreed to approve prayers there. However, when Christians said a prayer at the shrine of a martyr, were they praying to God, or to the martyr in the shrine who still lived in the life after death and might help them? Teachers of doctrine said that the Saints were in heaven but that God is everywhere. These saints were made by memory of the people rather than by edict but then people started to ask whether these cults were really informed.

When the 'Lives of the Saints' were written, the documents were more like sermons. Jerome made up imaginary lives of people about whom he knew almost nothing. Charlemagne made the first effort to find a way of 'approving' a saint. About the year 1000, the Pope started to authorise certain cults, and approximately 200 years later the Pope's right to decide became the law of the Western Church. The people, however, went on making their own saints without paying attention to what Rome decided. They had an idea of a saint and all saints were supposed to fit it. Monks wrote the lives of saints, and since they lived in communities which continued, the community could continue to lobby for a certain person. **There are very few lives of saints which are 'lifelike'** until the time of St Francis of Assisi.

Nowadays the canonisation process requires two miracles. Before the Enlightenment (17th – 18th centuries) many things were accepted as miraculous that can now be explained and the concept of 'miraculous' has changed. **Now it suggests that no natural physical explanation is possible.** However many of us know people in our lives whose goodness has shone and they are our own personal saints. Maybe with time we will get back to the original idea that we are all called to be saints – because we are disciples.



Confirmation Reflections

Confirmation is when you get blessed by the Holy Spirit. We are making our Confirmation on Friday. In preparation for this event we had Reflection Day with Bishop Tomlinson, who came in and shared with us some information about Confirmation and the Gifts of the Spirit. We also made our Confirmation posters to stick up in the church. For Confirmation we have to pick a Saint. The Saint I chose was Saint Matilda. I chose her because she has good qualities such as charity. She has charity because she devoted her life to God and spent lots of her time doing things for others. Rebecca

Bishop Tomlinson came to our school on Reflection Day. We watched a movie on people (soccer players) who believe in God and the Holy Spirit. We asked Bishop Tomlinson some questions about what we have to do on the night. My Saint is St David, I think he has lots of patience because he always went the hard way. Chris

Bishop Tomlinson came to our school on Reflection Day and talked to us about Confirmation. He asked us about our Saints and why we chose them. I chose St James because I think he has courage and understanding which are qualities I admire. I am looking forward to Confirmation in 2010.

On Friday the 16th of July, we had a Reflection Day. Bishop Tomlinson came to our school and talked to us about Confirmation. It was interesting. I chose St Patrick of Ireland. He was a good man. He showed courage and understanding by understanding and believing that God was real. He showed courage by standing up for himself throughout when he was alive. Dan

On Friday, 16th of July, the Grade 6's had their Reflection Day, a preparation for Confirmation. Bishop Tomlinson came to talk to us about Confirmation. I chose St Bridget of Sweden, because my Mum chose her and when she was explaining why she chose her, it sounded interesting so I chose her. I think making my Confirmation will be a good experience. Chloe

Hello, I am Marcus, and I am making my Confirmation. For preparation we talked to the Bishop and found out what he thought about Confirmation. I chose St Anthony because my Grandad chose him and I wondered why he chose St Anthony. Anthony, I think, carries gifts like wisdom, right judgement and knowledge. I hope to have these qualities when I am older. Marcus



On Friday the 16th of July the Grade 6 children and some other children are making their Confirmation. In preparation for Confirmation we had a Reflection Day in which we listened to Bishop Tomlinson talk to us about Confirmation. We made posters for Confirmation and got to know each other better. For Confirmation we had to pick a Saint and I chose St Clare of Assisi. I chose her because she shows courage, selflessness and other fruits and gifts I would like to have. Grace

On Friday the 16th of July we had our Confirmation Reflection Day. The Bishop, Les Tomlinson came to talk about Confirmation. We talked about what Confirmation meant to us and our Saint we picked. My Saint I chose is St Rose of Lima. I chose her because she seemed kind and loving and I wanted to learn more about her. I think she possesses the gifts of understanding, knowledge, reverence and right judgement. I am really looking forward to Confirmation on Friday the 23rd. Elizabeth

On Friday 16th of July, the Grade 6's prepared for their Confirmation by having a Reflection Day. Bishop Tomlinson came and he talked to us all about the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and asked us which Saint we chose and why. We then asked him lots of questions which he answered patiently. The Saint I chose is Saint Frances of Rome. The reason I chose her is because she was always ready to help others, even at the hardest of times. I think Frances has all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, understanding, wisdom, courage, knowledge, reverence, right judgement, wonder and awe. Rachel

“Who do you think I am?”

Sometimes theological jargon can tend to obfuscate the truth rather than clarify it. **Peter’s Confession at Caesarea Phillippi was recorded in all three Synoptic Gospels** - Matthew, Mark and Luke and has been humorously rewritten as follows.

Jesus said unto them: "But who do you say that I am?"

And Peter replied: "You are the eschatological manifestation of the ground of our being, the kerygma in which we find the ultimate meaning of our interpersonal relationships".

And Jesus said: "What?"

Recently, at the Masses on Sunday, three of our parishioners were **asked to respond to Jesus’ question in the Gospel “Who do you think I am?”**. They have given us permission to reprint their responses here.

Sr. Marie Hanger R.S.J.

Jesus, Who Are You?

Curious to know what Jesus was like, Zaccheus climbed a sycamore tree to have a better view of Jesus as he passed by. Noticing him in the tree, Jesus beckoned Zaccheus to come down from the tree as he wished to dine with him that night. **There is something about this incident that evokes for me some aspects of Jesus’ personality... His awareness of others, his desire to spend time with people. My experience of Jesus is, however, quite different from Zaccheus’. Each time I participate in the celebration of the Eucharist I am aware of Jesus’ presence in the community gathered together, in the priest who presides, in the Word proclaimed and in the bread and wine consecrated “for us and our salvation”.**

I first learnt about Jesus from the answers in the small Catechism. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is true God and true man. It is upon the basis of knowledge acquired in those early days that my understanding of Jesus has grown. At one time Pope Paul VI referred to Jesus as **“the human face of God”**. **For me, Jesus is my dearest and closest friend. Almost 50 years ago I vowed my life to Him as a Sister of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. At first my response to Jesus invitation to follow Him in this way was rather reluctant but as the years have progressed I have become more and more grateful for the religious vocation that has provided me with so many opportunities to know Jesus. I love to reflect on the Scriptures that reveal so much to us.**

Whenever I think of Jesus as a friend I recall passages in the Book of Deuteronomy where God converses with Moses and refers to him as **“very dear friend”**. **God also reminds Moses that He chose him as his friend not because of any great gifts Moses had but because he and his people were among the least. It is comforting to know that we do not have to be anyone special to be loved by God— though, paradoxically, we have become special because God loves us.**

Among the Gospel images that appeal to me is that of “The Good Shepherd”. The parable implies security and trust and that even when I stray Jesus will continue to seek and support me. Another image is contained in the words

Come to me all you who labour and I will give you rest.

When I am beset with anxiety, suffering or sorrow I feel I can crawl into the arms of Jesus and be comforted.

My friend Jesus makes demands on me. Being His friend requires the practice of many virtues and that I be forgiving, compassionate and non-judgmental in my day to day living. To follow Him I am also expected to take up the cross daily **to accept, as St Paul reminds us, “the folly of the cross”. I don’t have to look for the cross, however, it will find me. Nor do I carry it alone. Jesus promises to be with me always. My absolute trust is in Him.**

Janine Tillig

“Who do you think I am?”

In the gospel today Jesus asks the question “Who do you think I am?”

I think Jesus is a person of great love, who through his teachings inspires me to try to be a better person. He has taught me about happiness, about caring for each other and in times of conflict, to find forgiveness in my heart.

His greatest act of love was his suffering and dying on the cross for our redemption. But the spirit of Jesus continues to live in our lives.

Jesus is in my family. When I was young, mum and dad created a loving and caring home, and made many sacrifices to provide me with a good life. They taught me about who Jesus was, and his importance in my life. I had a great sense of belonging.

With my husband Peter, our five children and two grandchildren, Jesus is present in our family. With love and understanding, we recognise the dignity of each person. There are times too when we face challenges and struggles with each other, and in these times of hurt we find forgiveness.

Jesus is in the people who stand up for those who have no voice. Through their courage and determination and sacrifices they make, they change the world into a better place. I’ve recently joined St Vincent de Paul at St Thomas’, and I see Jesus in the dedication and commitment of the people in the St Vincent de Paul team.

I’ve been a parishioner at St Thomas’ for 28 years. When I come to the celebration of Mass, Jesus is here in the Eucharist. I feel a sense of being nourished and strengthened. This helps me in the choices I make in my life. Jesus is present in the people of St Thomas’. There are many committed groups that make the parish a loving and welcoming community.

Prayer in my life is important. It’s in talking to Jesus and listening to him, I feel a closer relationship to him.

Throughout my life there has been much joy and happiness, as well as times of sadness and grief. Knowing that Jesus is in my life gives me peace and comfort.

Evelyn Tan

Who is Jesus to me?

It is such a blessing to be given this opportunity to share with you who Jesus is to me. As I was praying about this, the words of a song came to my mind. It goes like this :

“Jesus, what a beautiful name! Son of God, Son of Man, Lamb that was slain. Joy and peace, strength and hope, grace that blows all fear away. Jesus what a beautiful name!”

I was saved by Jesus 25 years ago. Before that, I was living a life that was without meaning—my heart was empty. Although I had a wonderful family, lots of friends, a career and had travelled a fair bit, there was a void in my heart. Then something happened to me. My world was shaken and it came tumbling down. That was when Jesus got my attention. I decided to follow Him and to accept Him as my Saviour. I remember that some 20 years ago, I had to go to hospital for some surgery. On the Sunday before I had to go to hospital, I was in church, praying after Holy Communion. I said to The Lord that I was afraid and before I could finish the sentence, the words of a hymn appeared on the overhead projector and it said **“Be not afraid. I go before you always. Come follow me and I will give you rest”**

To me Jesus is my Saviour, my healer, my joy, my peace, my hope, my strength, my double portion, my provider, my restorer. **In Him I have everything I need. He is my all in all. He is my triple “A” God—Almighty, Amazing, Awesome!**

St. Thomas' Social Scene- What's On?

Our social events in the parish are open to all.

YOU will be made welcome at any of our activities.



Film Night -In June a small group of parishioners enjoyed The Concert at the Rivoli, taking advantage of Tuesday prices there. On Friday, 30th July, we are back to Waverley cinema to see The Waiting City **and there'll be** a light supper afterwards, as usual. Pat Scott, who passed away in June, was an avid supporter of our film nights and we miss her warm, lively company.

Watch the weekly parish newsletter for our next film in Spring. All welcome and transport can be arranged

Gabrielle Mahony, 9878 4415



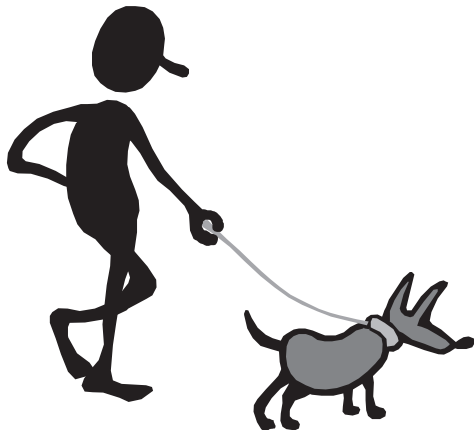
Live Show- La Prima Opera -a matinee performance on Wednesday, 22nd September at Whitehorse Centre. This will be performed by a polished concert opera company and prices will be very reasonable. Look for details in the weekly newsletter later on. Keep the date free and contact Rhonda early to help get good seats.

Rhonda Neumann, 9894 0176

Day Trip - Our next Sunday Trip will be in October. Williamstown or Port Melbourne has been suggested. If you have any thoughts on this matter, please contact Graham. More details later.

Graham Copsey, 9878 5286,

Rhonda Neumann, 9894 0176



*Walkers- The Walking Group meet each Tuesday at 8.30a.m. in the Blackburn Lake car park, Central Road. Our walks are always **completed in under an hour and follow a variety of local paths.** Don't let the weather deter you....dress accordingly. Everyone is welcome, so join us one day soon.

Joan Morgan, 9877 3472

Cards Nights- 2nd Thursday of each month- Come along to enjoy a very social and sometimes serious evening of Solo. Our numbers have grown steadily and we gather in the church meeting room, now nicely heated. There is a lucky door prize and the evening ends with light supper. New players can now come for tuition at 7p.m. and the main cards start at 7.30p.m., as usual. Experienced and new players are very welcome.

Don and Pat Peake, 9878 4790



*SPOT- Our group is mostly confined to indoor painting and sketching whilst **the weather is wintry. But there's always plenty to challenge us from still life or photos of interest.** We normally meet on the second Wednesday of the month, around 9.30 a.m. at 4 Wellington Ave, Blackburn. If you are interested please give me a call.

Marie Dillon 9878 0319

*Book Clubs 1&2- The Book groups are going along very well with a variety of topics and even films to support the books at times. Group 2 has a couple of vacancies currently, so if you would like to find out more, please ring Patricia to enquire. Books come from the library, so our costs are minimal.



Ursula Waide, (1)9878 5328 Patricia Harrison (2)9878 9852

Carers' Coffee Break- There will be another opportunity for people who are caring or assisting family members on a regular basis to take some time out for a chat with other carers on Wednesday, 1st September at the Jacaranda Café in Blackburn. Please feel free to ring our contacts if you would like to join us or need transport on the day.

Sr. Margaret Burchell 9878 0818, Marie Dillon, 9878 0319

2 Day Bus Trip- Travelling to Howlong-Corowa-Mulwala. Good times, great company, **Don't Miss Out** See notice board for details. Cost \$50 Twin share / Single Supplement \$29 Payment before 13th September to secure a place.



Bookings ASAP: *Peter and Yvonne Crowe : Ph. 9877 3360*

or *Kath Pope Ph: 9878 3375*

Contacts:

Cards- Don & Pat Peake, 9878 4790

Films- Gabrielle Mahony, 9878 4415

Walkers- Joan Morgan, 9877 3472

Sunday trips- Graham Copsey, 9878 5286

SPOT Artwork- Marie Dillon, 9878 0319

Live Show- Rhonda Neumann, 9894 0176

Book Clubs- Ursula Waide, 9878 5328, Patricia Harrison, 9878 9852

Carers' Coffee Break- *Sr. Marg Burchell, 9878 0818, Marie Dillon, 9878 0319*

General Information- Peter & Yvonne Crowe, 9877 3360

**St Thomas .
Spring Time Fair**

Saturday 23rd October



Please Contact—Peter Ciardulli 98777838 or 0425703645 for offers of help or ideas

Youth : Dinner Party for Parents

Denise Lyons



As I begin writing this, it's just two weeks since the parish Youth Group held our annual Dinner Party for Parents of Youth Groupers. On a very wet and cold winter's night, 32 parents and a couple of special guests gathered in the church narthex. On one of those few occasions for parents of young children, the parents were waited on by their kids.

The activity began at 3.30pm when Youth Groupers started arriving straight from school – some walking across the parish car park from our primary school, some being dropped off by their parents, whilst others, like Monique and Taylor, had to walk from the station in pouring rain. Needless to say, a warm change of clothes and a hair dryer were all the girls were interested in.

Four teams – one in the presbytery cooking, one in the

church kitchen cooking, one in the crying room preparing the 'dining room' and one in the narthex organising the decorations – set to from 4pm to 6.30pm, being guided by our four leaders – myself, John O'Loughlin, Pat Mara and Natasha O'Hea. All went well except for a minor incident when Amber cut her finger whilst cutting up vegies. Despite the busyness and hard work, the kids love this part of the evening. Preparing for a big event with their friends – what more could they ask for!



Parents began arriving just prior to the 7.17pm (no, that's not a typo!) arrival time, the foyer gradually becoming hidden amidst a sea of umbrellas as the rain continued to fall well into the evening. But the weather didn't dampen the spirits of parents and guests who were excited to see what the Youth Group had organised for our second Annual Dinner Party. With kids standing at the door ready to welcome, more kids giving out name tags and a further group of Youth Groupers serving food and drinks, the parents and special guests responded with smiles of delight.

Our guests seemed surprised that everything was so well organised. Not long after arrival, they were called to the dining room and seated at their tables by the Youth Groupers before a traditional blessing by Monique was given, followed by a more lively and youthful blessing by three of the girls.



The meal, different to last year, consisted of Pumpkin Soup for entree, followed by Beef Casserole or Mixed Vegies in a Honey & Ginger Glaze served on Hokkien Noodles. Dessert held 3 options – the old favourite Fruit Salad or, for the sweet tooth, Berry Royale or Chocolate Mousse. And for a bit of fun, tea and coffee were served with Smarties!! Again, all went really well except for some under catering of the main course (don't know how I did that!) but the few parents for whom we had to 'come up with something quick' were very gracious which was very much appreciated by those in the kitchen who were stressing about how we would deal with the situation.

Between courses, the Youth Groupers provided some en-

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similar. Welfare, Religion, Technology, Literacy and Numeracy are all major foci everywhere. It was great to speak to children, be shown around their schools and even speak to parents.

I do have a lot to share with everyone. I took a lot of photos of schools and have also established a couple of links with schools in England that our Yr 5/6 children might follow up. The children and staff have heard many of my stories and I hope to show some photos with explanations at our assemblies.

While away I did miss a few major events and celebrations. The Year 4 children celebrated their First Communion, the Year 5/6 children attended Camp and the whole school celebrated the Feast of St Thomas the Apostle. School holidays occurred recently and now we have begun Term 3. This term the Preps will celebrate 100 days at school, the Year 6 children will celebrate their Confirmation and hopefully our new building work will be complete. We look forward to another enriching, rewarding term ahead.

Dianne Redford

tainment. With some last minute sales of our 'parish pens', we were able to raise enough funds to pay for the dinner party ourselves. After the main course, the kids performed some instrumental acts as well as singing. It was something different and a lot of fun. And we finished off with a game of trivia.

As the Coordinator of the St. T's Youth Group, I must say that the Youth Groupers were wonderful on the night. They engaged with everyone, welcomed and cared for them, and cleared and cleaned up, often without being asked. I am really proud of what they achieved. They showed us once again what they are capable of, that they are terrific at taking direction, and that they can achieve a high standard when they put their mind to it. Oh, and that they can put up with me when I'm feeling miserable because of a heavy cold! Their parents must be very proud of them.



News from **St Thomas'**

School

Dianne Redford—

School Principal

School news is limited in this edition as I have recently returned from a trip to England and Ireland. This trip was enrichment leave which is a program supported through the Catholic Education Office for experienced leaders in Catholic Schools. I travelled with a group of Principal colleagues from other Catholic Schools from the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Our particular program was based around enhancing our leadership and observing education in England and Ireland. We also attended a number of **conferences and completed a course through St Mary's University Strawberry Hill London.**



My trip was absolutely sensational, in fact life changing, from the leadership perspective. It was inspiring, exciting and there was so much learning involved. It was a very different experience to a holiday when one is a tourist. We were continually involved / saturated in educational ideas, discussion and experiences. **Even our casual conversation and 'down time' was around what we'd seen and involved reflecting and analysing what is happening overseas.**

We are very lucky in Australia and at St Thomas'. Our economy is great as was reflected in the everyday pressures that schools overseas are dealing with. Budget cuts in education were announced while we were there and we saw the unsettling effect this had on schools and educational organizations generally. Our conditions in Australia are very good. The physical set up of schools and the teaching environment in Ireland and England, cannot be compared to ours. Even without our new building our buildings and classrooms at St Thomas' are luxurious! We looked at a wide variety of schools – Catholic, Government and Secondary. We travelled to areas outside London, including Bristol, Birmingham and Ireland & always came up with the same conclusions. While overseas schools do make the most of confining, restricted conditions and education is of a good standard however our schooling in Australia is excellent.

Children are the same all over the world and they respond in the same way no matter what school they attend. The resources and teaching expectations in schools are all very

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8:30 am and 10:30 am
Weekday Masses
Monday & Wednesday 9:10 am
Tuesday and Friday 10:00 am
Wednesday 10:30 am at Retirement Village
Centre
Thursday – Prayer and Communion Service
9:10 am
Rosary
Weekdays before Mass
Sacrament of Penance
(First Rite of Reconciliation)
Saturday 10:00 am
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