



Under the care of the Augustinians



Annual Report 2014-2015

PARISH PRAYER

Lord, help us,
your parish community of South Yarra,
to be open to the call of your word.

Grant us the grace to be sensitive
to the needs of each other
and to show a welcoming spirit to all.

Create in us a generous spirit
so that we may build, protect and affirm
a more loving community.

Amen

The Augustinians

The Augustinians are a religious Order in the Catholic Church whose special call it is to live together in communities of love, humility, friendship and sharing - a focus they share with the ministries they serve.

Inspired by the teaching and spirituality of St. Augustine of Hippo they came to Australia from Ireland in 1838, and have served here in every form of Pastoral Ministry since then.

They came to the Parish of South Yarra in 1976 where they have become the inspiration of its Social Outreach to the poor, the homeless and the disadvantaged



An Augustinian parish values...

- offering a personal and unconditional welcome to all and the opportunity for friendship and social interaction in different contexts
- the personal attributes of its members and the diversity of gifts they bring: their expertise and talents; their commitment and sense of shared responsibility and loyalty
- commitment to social justice within and beyond our immediate community
- the opportunities and encouragement provided for leadership and service in different ministries in the parish and broader community
- the leadership and service of the ordained ministers, religious and Parish Associates, support staff and volunteers
- the history and traditions of our faith drawn together under the Augustinian charism
- the ecumenical diversity of different faith traditions in the wider community
- meeting the challenges of the times, being open to change, and responding constructively
- the responsible stewardship of its resources

Parish Vision

We, the people of the Catholic Parish of South Yarra, under the care of the Augustinians, commit ourselves to the following vision and strive to make it real in our daily lives

To be a vibrant and welcoming Church community of mutual care and support sustained by the Gospel

As an expression of our social concern, we walk with people who are marginalised and alienated - our faith in action

We are responsive to, and engaged with the needs and issues of our times



The Parish of South Yarra acknowledges the Wurundjeri people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land.

We also pay our respects to the Elders both past and present of the Kulin Nation and extend that respect to other Indigenous Australians who are present in our community.

CONTENTS

An Augustinian Parish	2
Parish Vision Statement	3
Parish Priest's Annual Report	5
The Chronicle	7
Parish Pastoral Council Report	8
Sacramental Preparation	10
Liturgy and Prayer	11
Alfred Hospital	11
Children's Liturgy	12
Alpha Report	13
Ecumenical and Interfaith Activities in South Yarra	14
Parish Visitation	15
Friends of St Augustine in the Parish of South Yarra	16
St Joseph's Outreach Services Report	18
The Stables Unit Crisis Shelter	20
Emergency Food Store and Bread Collection	21
The Stonnington Bus	22
Social Justice Committee	23
The Barry Library	24
St Thomas Aquinas Jubilee	25
Other Social Activities in our Parish	26
Finance Committee Report	27
Graphs of Financial Statement	28
Parish Information; Mass Times	29

PARISH PRIEST'S ANNUAL REPORT

Looking at my notepad covering the gamut of things that have taken place in our South Yarra Parish since the last AGM I am almost at a loss knowing where to begin.

Most important is to acknowledge the appointment and arrival of Fr. Michael Sullivan as co-pastor as well as Prior of our small Augustinian community. His appointment has allowed Fr. Gerry Dullard to withdraw from more official duties so he can continue to potter around in the garden. To accommodate his increasing difficulty in scaling the stairs in the Priory, we were able to install a stair-lift recently. For Fr. Michael it was the return to an earlier stamping ground, having made his acquaintance with us for a brief two months shortly before his ordination in 1977. He is indeed a very welcome addition to our parish team.

Meanwhile some significant events in our Parish life were an Ecumenical Eucharist celebrated in St. Joseph's on the feast of St. Augustine last year. For many years we have participated in these celebrations when held in Christ Church, South Yarra, St. Martin's, Hawksburn, and South Yarra Baptist church. However, this was the first occasion where we were the hosts at a Eucharist. With about 80 people participating, most from our own parish, it was indeed a joyful and spirit-filled occasion. Our next opportunity will be on the feast of the Transfiguration, Thursday, 6th August.

Another event was the successful Thanksgiving Campaign held last October. Spread over 4 Sundays, and with the assistance of several parishioners sharing their stories of gratitude towards God in the way he had blessed them, the efforts of our Finance Committee were rewarded with a significant increase in contributions to the running and maintenance of the Parish, with the end result of being able to stay within Budget for the first time in many years. Well done to all involved!!

The beginning of 2015 saw us prepare for the Centenary celebration of St. Thomas Aquinas church, with two well-attended working bees achieving a greatly improved look to the garden area around the church as well as the outside of the church, while inside much repair, maintenance and clean-up work was done. The result was nothing short of spectacular, while the celebration itself, followed by a garden party in the grounds was greatly appreciated by all who joined in the celebration.

More work was done in May and June, with some major repairs to the ridge-cap, slates and guttering of the church, with interior repairs to the walls and painting still in progress at the time of writing. Once completed we will be able to install a newly obtained and refurbished electronic organ which, thanks to the efforts of Janet Maher, was donated to the church by a friend, Geoff Cousins. Thank you Geoff and Janet.

March saw us add Chris Ryan to our office staff, with the specific task of striving to market our hiring facilities, especially to schools for retreats, reflection days or workshop opportunities, so their under-used capacities can be used in extended income-generating ways.

Strong winds during the year saw to significant changes to Parish grounds. First to go was the magnificent fig tree at the back of the car park. Sodden ground and gale force winds saw to it that it simply toppled over. Its removal allowed for more parking space as well as planting a new shrub screen along the back-wall. Next to go was the large elm tree between the Parish Centre and the Priory, shedding large branches into the playground area. Its removal has allowed Fr. Gerry to develop a pleasant rock garden. Another elm tree in the backyard of the Priory threatened to bring down the heritage-listed garden wall, so that too had to disappear. It offered an opportunity to transform a vegie patch, used by residents of the Haven, into a therapeutic Garden set-up. More about that in the SJOS report.

Not so visible is the work done in the Memorial Garden where the ground around the large urn, found to be composed largely of building waste, was removed to a depth of 60 cm. and replaced with topsoil to facilitate the future interment of ashes.

The Spaghetti Nights and the Priory Dinners, once a month, continue to be much appreciated by all who attend. In the relaxed atmosphere parishioners are able to see each other socially in ways not possible in brief encounters before or after Mass.

On the spiritual side, beside sacramental Preparation for 1st Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation, RCIA and discussion groups during the Advent, Lent and post-Easter seasons, a small but enthusiastic group of young people initiated their own study group using the Alpha program of initiation into the world of Christianity, Bible study and spirituality, - at a deeper and more guided way than available through weekend Mass attendance and listening to the homily. Their hope is to reach out still further to others in the younger generation.

Cardinal Wilfred Napier of Durban, South Africa, came to visit our parish on sat. 16th May, with the express purpose of viewing our outreach facilities in Transitional housing, food-store, bread supply and Crisis shelter. He was duly impressed and expressed his appreciation of how we have put into practice the material aspects of Pope Francis' exhortation "The Joy of the Gospel".

Mass attendance is steady at about 250 people present each weekend, including visitors who find us on the web, or keep returning whenever they find themselves in Melbourne. It's a sign of a living Church among the decline frequently recognized elsewhere.

This snapshot of some of the activities taking place in our parish would not be possible without the dedicated service of our Parish staff, the members of the Parish Pastoral Council, our musos and other Liturgy volunteers, Finance Committee, social Justice, SJOS and the many who just casually come by to lend a hand. My grateful thanks to all of them for being the Body of Christ alive among us.

A special thanks also to Frs. Gerry and Michael for their work and support throughout the year. I would not be able to don the harness still, if it were not for their presence and companionship to encourage me.

Fr Abel Van der Veer OSA

Parish Priest

THE CHRONICLE

The Chronicle has now completed three years of publication and is firmly established as a major component of Parish communication.

It is particularly appreciated by our housebound parishioners, who almost always provide some feedback, while it prompts others to let us know "We like what you are doing here!"

Maybe, for some people, its format of being a Chronicle limits the range of items that may be published in its pages, now consisting mainly of reports of activities engaged in during the previous 3 months, and some editorial comments Fr. Abel likes to make. Yet the opportunity is there to widen its scope. We'd love to see other contributors beyond those who report on their groups events.

Another consideration is its continued existence, on two scores, - the cost of printing and posting. These could be reduced considerably if people are happy to receive the Chronicle by e-mail, yet, conversely, we would lose the advantage of helping to keep our database up-to-date through the return of letters where people have moved away from the parish. A further question is whether people are as likely to read it when it comes by e-mail, rather than in hard copy? Some reaction to this question would be appreciated.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL REPORT

South Yarra Parish Pastoral Council 2014 - 2015

Parish Priest Fr Abel Van der Veer OSA

Chair:	Di Brebner	Deputy Chair:	Ann Maree Pagon
Secretary:	Kelly Barnes	Deputy Secretary:	Antoniette D'Andrea
Pastoral Worker:	Joyce Flint		

Isabel Cid	Milda Gauld (Resigned)	Savina D'Souza
Jorge Sanchez	Andrew Balcerzak	Marc Dixon
Paul Mulqueen	Bernadette Dennis	Toby Sloan
Gareth Jelenich		

Our Parish continues to show good growth and much worthwhile activity as we come to the end of another year.

We were delighted to welcome Fr Michael Sullivan OSA to our parish in January. Michael had served in the Augustinian overseas mission in Korea for twenty years, being the foundation member there with Fr Brian Buckley. Michael brings a warm, gentle and thought-provoking spirit to his ministry and his presence is very much appreciated. Long may he stay among us!

Thanks must go to several groups and individuals who have made significant contributions to the smooth running of the parish over the past year.

The Centenary of St Thomas Aquinas Church in February was a major highlight of the parish year. On a beautiful summer morning a large crowd gathered for Mass of thanksgiving, followed by a splendid lunch in the church grounds. Our renewed thanks to Andrew Balcerzak and the committee who organized such a successful and enjoyable celebration.

The growing initiative of the Social Justice Committee this year is the Parish Conversations, when guest speakers are invited to address us on current issues. The Grass Roots Project, an outcome of the Council for Christians and Jews, brought two very engaging speakers to us in May. Thanks to John Flint for initiating this event. In July parishioners have the opportunity to hear an Australian woman, Susan Howe, who lives in Mildura and sometimes attends Mass at St Joseph's, speak about POSHU, a wonderful organization she has established in Uganda. Bill Bateman, who was the inaugural chair of the Social Justice Committee, tendered his resignation this year, and we thank him for his excellent leading of the group.

The work of St Joseph's Outreach Services continues to provide wonderful support for a wide range of the most vulnerable members of our community, regardless of their background. A very large number of people, from within the parish and beyond, contribute quietly and effectively to this work, led by our Parish Team, now including Chris Ryan, and the indefatigable Bernadette Dennis, Secretary to SJOS.

It was a privilege and a delight to welcome Cardinal Wilfred Napier OFM, Archbishop of Durban, South Africa to the parish in May. He had heard of our SJOS activities and wished to see them. The cardinal celebrated Mass and joined us for morning tea before touring our facilities.

Finally, we are most appreciative of the tireless and dedicated leadership of our three priests, Frs Abel Van der Veer, Michael Sullivan and Gerry Dullard OSA, our Pastoral worker, Joyce Flint and our parish team. Without any fuss they lead us in prayer, organize the sacramental programs, dream up new activities, support and encourage all the work that our parish undertakes, and we are most grateful for them and their Augustinian spirit, helping us to live out the Gospel message in South Yarra.

My thanks to the 2014-15 Parish Council members, who have worked tirelessly in leading the many activities through the year and given generously of their time and energy attending our monthly meetings and giving much thought and discussion to the issues continually confronting the smooth running of our parish. Several councilors, Antoniette D'Andrea, Paul Mulqueen, Toby Sloan and I, have completed two terms on the Council, while Ann Maree Pagon, Brian Mallon, Milda Gauld and Gareth Jelenich have tendered their resignations and we thank them all for their generous service to the parish. It has been a privilege to chair the Parish Pastoral Council and I thank them for their dedication and commitment.

Di Brebner

Chair 2014-2015

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION.

Our Parish continues to offer Sacramental Preparation for both adults and children, even while they are few in number and the preparation falls mainly on Joyce Flint, our Pastoral Associate, and Fr. Abel.

Baptism for first-time parents was done on an individual basis by Fr. Abel, taking them through the Baptism ceremony while emphasizing the responsibility they accept in having a child baptized. There were 16 of these, while 39 children in all were baptized, as well as three adults (RCIA)

Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist was a combined effort of Joyce Flint, Fr. Abel and Fr. Michael (1st Communion), together with the parents of these children. In this way we had 5 children for 1st Reconciliation and 5 for 1st Communion. We had no ceremony for the Confirmation of children between July 2014 and June 2015, the next due to take place on August 23rd.

RCIA

With joy our RCIA team accompanied one candidate, Claudia Devos, through her preparation for Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist from last September until her joy-filled birth into the Body of Christ at the Easter Vigil. Beside that we were able to welcome two others into the fullness of our Catholic faith: Han Kwee, prepared privately by Fr. Gerry, and Ezra Hermawan who had completed the RCIA in Indonesia, but somehow missed out on the day he was to be baptized.

Weddings.

With 21 weddings we are well down on the number last year (30). All couples are required to do a Marriage Preparation Course provided by the Archdiocese, while we are responsible for the paperwork and assistance with preparing for the ceremony itself, choosing readings and preparing a booklet, if so desired. In this latter form we also assist many other couples whose wedding is to take place overseas or in another diocese in Australia.

Funerals

In view of the many grey heads in our congregation, we have surprisingly few funerals in our parish, just 10 in the last 12 months. An explanation may be that many of our parishioners tend to be long-lived, with 3 centenarians among them this year. Or is it that after entering Aged Care facilities, funerals are often conducted from there?

LITURGY AND PRAYER

Parish liturgy continues to be at the heart of all our parish activity each week. In the time-honoured tradition, our Christmas and Easter liturgies were very well attended and helped us capture the spirit of the seasons very fittingly. The Interchurch Ecumenical Liturgies with our two neighbouring Anglican parishes, Christ Church and St Martin's Hawksburn, and the South Yarra Baptist Community continue this year. Our parish will host the group on the Feast of the Transfiguration in August this year.

The celebration of the sacraments during Sunday Masses is always an experience that touches us deeply. Thanks to our priests and Joyce Flint for preparing the children.

The Parish Retreat Day, organized by the Friends of St Augustine, was a wonderful time for the twenty eight people who participated. Our thanks to Mary McCormick, Judith Duncan and Fr Michael for leading us in prayer.

Di Brebner

Co-ordinator

ALFRED HOSPITAL

Our Sunday Communion ministry to the patients and families in the Alfred Hospital continues as a strong commitment each weekend, drawing the heartfelt appreciation from those we are able to visit. This past year several people have had to withdraw from this most important ministry and parishioners are invited to consider taking up the role .

Di Brebner

Co-ordinator

CHILDREN'S LITURGY REPORT

The Children's Liturgy takes place on the first Sunday of the month excluding school holidays and long weekends. In June 2015 we extended this to include also the third Sunday of the Month.

The following sets out the dates on which the Children's Liturgy took place over a 12 month period.

Date:		No of children in attendance:
Year A		
3/8/14	18 th Sunday in Ordinary Time	16
7/9/14	23 rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	4
7/12/14	Second Sunday of Advent	1
Year B		
1/2/15	Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time	10
1/3/15	Second Sunday in Lent	7
3/5/15	Fifth Sunday of Easter	15

The lessons planned for the Children's Liturgy are based on a programme: The Liturgy of the Word with Children by Katie Thompson. Each lesson has a focus, a Gospel reading, a reflection and activity. I also refer to other resources so that I am able to prepare for the varied ages of the children in attendance. The children attending can vary between 18 months to 14 years of age.

I have loved working with the children and parents involved in the Children's Liturgy. Everyone seems so enthusiastic and engaged in the sessions. Children are busy with the activities and parents are only too happy to help out. More often than not, it is a challenge to try and conclude each of the sessions within the time frame.

I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of the Children's Liturgy. It has given me the opportunity to meet some wonderful families within our Parish community. To work with an amazing group of children has been a wonderful experience.

T Elizabeth Follacchio

Coordinator

ALPHA REPORT

After Andy's Baptism, a desire to share our faith journey with people of similar age started growing. Being a part of the R.C.I.A. (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) for two years we realised the value of meeting regularly and exploring various aspects of our faith. During our visit in Lithuania a year ago we met with a very established Catholic group which runs various faith development activities.

I grew up with this group of people and I knew that they would be the best source to give advice based on years of experience. The first thing they suggested was to start group meetings following the Alpha Course - run it ourselves—as this would help to establish a structure and help us to learn 'sharing'.

Following this advice we came back to Melbourne and caught up with Alpha Melbourne, who were extremely helpful introducing us to the Alpha Course and providing material and support. At the same time we started inviting young adults in the Parish to join this group of faith sharing. Our Parish priests were very helpful by opening their Priory doors for our weekly evening meetings. With God's help, a total of 10 interested people in January committed to the Alpha course and continue to attend our regular weekly meeting. We offered the Alpha course for the initial 7 week period and now we are using different resources.

The Alpha course structure is still the core backbone of our meetings—starting with the meal (30 minutes), listening to the talk (30-60 minutes), sharing our thoughts (40 minutes) and finishing with the prayer (Our Father and prayers of intercession). Currently our topic is: 'Seven deadly sins and seven heavenly virtues', which triggers some really good discussions and discoveries within us during the week.

All of us hope that it will be a long term activity. Friendship based on faith is very strong and rewarding and that is what we value a lot. All of us come from different faith experiences, different routines and ways of praying and we find that each has an invaluable resource for learning how to maintain a relationship with God and through God with each other.

We are not an Alpha group any more having finished the Alpha course, but we call ourselves this sometimes, because we have not settled on a new name yet.

Milda and Andrew Gauld
Alpha Group Coordinators

ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES

At last year's AGM we were treated to a fascinating recounting of the Journey to Jerusalem. This was a trip of twelve Melbournians - four Christian, four Jewish, four Moslem – to Jerusalem in 2014. Each day as a team they would gather and study the texts relevant to a particular site to be visited that day. They then visited the site, returning to discuss what they had gleaned, felt, experienced, and discerned. Our audience was enthralled. Questions and discussion continued for several hours.

This year has seen the continuation of South Yarra Catholic Parish participating in ecumenical events with our neighbouring churches. We have celebrated St. Augustine's day at St Joseph's, Ascension Thursday at the Anglican Christ Church, the Epiphany with the South Yarra Baptists, and All Saints Day at St Martin's Anglican Church, Hawksburn. Those participating enjoy very meaningful services, followed by meeting with members of other churches over well catered tables.

The Victorian Council of Christians and Jews ran the Grass Roots Project in churches and synagogues throughout Melbourne this year. We hosted the project on what was to be the last day, however there was so much call for participation that it has been extended for another two months. At a workshop held for participating congregations it was continually expressed how well it was received and successful in people curious for a lot more information. Teams of a Christian and Jew came to tell their own journey of faith, how they came to be of that tradition, and how knowing more of other faiths, gives them a greater insight into their own.

Pope Francis spoke in Turin recently about the fruits of the ecumenical movement in recent years. The principle fruit, he said, "is the rediscovery of the fraternity that unites all those who believe in Jesus Christ and are baptised in His Name." This, he said, "allows us to grasp the profound ties that already unite us, despite our differences. It concerns a communion that is still on a journey, which, with prayer, with continual personal and communal conversion, and with the help of the theologians, we hope, trusting in the action of the Holy Spirit, can become full and visible communion in truth and charity."

Pope Francis in Turin 22nd June 2015

Our next ecumenical service is in St Joseph's on Thursday 6th August in the evening, followed by supper. We are celebrating the Feast of the Transfiguration. Come and see! Mark it in your diary now. Look for the reminders in our newsletters.

John Flint

PARISH VISITATION

Several parishioners have been involved in visiting the housebound and nursing homes during the last twelve months. Our willingness to serve our fellow parishioners reflects our response to our Baptismal call to serve the people of God. This ministry is welcomed by our elderly, acting as a bridge between the assembly and those unable to personally worship at our weekly Liturgy by “bringing communion” to them in several ways. Within a warm and prayerful atmosphere the pastoral visitor shares their time, the gospel and the prayers of intercession from the previous Sunday, the Eucharist and the Sunday bulletin providing Parish news and events.

Following Mass on a Tuesday and Thursday several parishioners are visiting residents in our local Aged Facilities. Over the last year residents at MECWA Aged Care, Prahran have been receiving the Eucharist on a Tuesday in their rooms with Juileene McNally taking time afterwards for a chat and sometimes a prayer with them if asked. On Thursdays a Communion Service is held for residents (usually 5 in attendance) and afterwards Communion is taken to several others who are unable to attend the service. There is minimal intrusion during these visits and time spent is about 1½ hours. With the arrival of Fr Michael in the parish we have been able to offer a Mass every 6-8 weeks at the residence and usually this is well attended. By 8-9 residents. The residents are so happy that they can attend Mass.

Each Thursday morning Di Brebner visits Coppin Lodge in the Royal Freemasons Homes and leads a group of the residents in a Communion Service. Usually there are about twelve to fourteen residents in attendance, many of them wheelchair bound, and they are glad of the opportunity to gather and pray. Our thanks to Br Dennis Burland, a Christian Brother from St Mary’s Parish, who carried out this ministry for many years until early in 2015.

Eucharist is taken to several housebound parishioners due to illness and frailty. A nursing home at Brighton Beach is also visited fortnightly where a recent elderly parishioner and her son are now residing. Parishioners listen to the Sunday gospel followed by Prayers of Intercession that were read at our Sunday Masses. A weekly bulletin is welcomed which connects the housebound to Church events. Conversations after Communion help to bridge the gap of loneliness that many of these parishioners live with weekly. News items in the quarterly Chronicle, social events, Sacramental program and RCIA are topics raised with several parishioners remembering candidates in Sacramental and RCIA programs in their weekly prayers. The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and the Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered to these parishioners every three months by Fr Abel. This visit is welcomed and many begin to ask a week or so before the three month period.

For all of us, pastoral visits are a real privilege offering a vital pastoral link between the Parish and the communicant visited. It is an area that needs extending so if you have an hour or so and you wish to be involved in pastoral care of parishioners please speak to Fr Abel.

Juileene McNally, Di Brebner and Joyce Flint

Members of the Pastoral Care Team

FRIENDS OF ST AUGUSTINE IN THE PARISH OF SOUTH YARRA

As Friends of Saint Augustine we celebrated his Feast Day with fellow-parishioners at St. Joseph's in South Yarra. However, as the following weeks saw quite a number of our group dealing with serious health issues, we came together on Sunday October 19 for an Afternoon Tea. This was a low-key opportunity to be together as Friends, to affirm one another, to share our concerns and joys and to experience healing support. Care for one another has been a recurring theme; many firm friendships in the group have developed over the years, with members being able to provide support for those dealing with illness or other difficulties.

The afternoon was also an opportunity to share news and insights from the National Leaders' Weekend in early September which was attended by Mary McCormick and Judith Duncan. One of the purposes of this weekend was to set a theme for the coming year; the focus on the Augustinian quality of Interiority led to the planning for the 2015 programme on the topic of Prayer.

As in previous years we joined with Friends from Kyabram in a Saturday Seminar. This was held on 29th November and we deeply appreciate the effort they made to travel to share this important Reflection Day. The three themes chosen were An Attentive Heart, Struggling to be inside the present moment (Mindfulness) and Waiting is an Art. With extracts from the writings of Sister Joan Chittister OSB and Dietrich Bonhoeffer these themes were explored and served as a basis for deep reflection and discussion as we prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ. Mary McCormick and Maureen Atkins lead the sessions, which provided a truly appropriate introduction to the Advent Season and helped us all to focus on meaningful preparation for the spiritual celebration of Christmas.

This year it was time to break from our traditional practice of holding our first gathering of the year on Shrove Tuesday with an opportunity to reflect, pray and enjoy pancakes together. Instead, we were delighted to welcome Father Michael Sullivan OSA to South Yarra Friends with an afternoon tea. This significant change of session time was in response to the changing needs of some of our members from evening gatherings spread throughout the year and was reflected in our next activity. Although Mary McCormick, our Formation Co-ordinator had offered Friends a programme of three sessions on Prayer to be spread throughout 2015, after consultation with the Parish Council we broadened our approach by offering the three sessions together as one seminar day to the parish as a whole.

So on a Saturday, 23rd May, a core group of Friends was added to by a goodly number of parishioners, many new to our activities. It was very moving to experience this coming together, all of us seeking God with openness of heart. The three sessions of *Prayer in a Busy Life*, *Connections in Prayer* and *Augustine's Take on Prayer* were facilitated by Mary McCormick, Father Michael Sullivan OSA and Judith Duncan, with all present entering into each activity with honesty and generosity of spirit. Discussions

were animated and lively, and we also felt the power of silence as we meditated together a number of times throughout the day, looking within yet together prayerfully. It was a measure of the value of this that many who had other commitments extended their time with the group beyond expectations.

We concluded our day with a session entitled *Stepping back into our busy worlds*, considering how we could transition from a day of prayerful reflection back into the everyday routine, taking with us insights from our shared journey. To assist this we all wrote a personal reflection in the form of a letter to ourselves, to be posted for us in a fortnight's time as an extension of our prayerful day. We had experienced input from a variety of sources, including the writings of Saint Augustine, contemporary reflections, music and works of art. With this inspiration we worked in small groups and created prayers on a range of themes.

Gatherings of Friends give us an opportunity to make progress in our spiritual lives with a discussion on a particular theme or some of St. Augustine's writing on a topic of current relevance. There is also material provided for prayer and reflection at each gathering, thus ensuring that the ideas can be not just a 'one-off' but followed through subsequently and incorporated into our daily lives. And of course Friends emphasise the communal nature of our gatherings with Augustinian hospitality, a shared supper or light meal as food for the body as well as for the soul. We also share the quarterly newsletter 'Amici', which is distributed Australia-wide. Parishioners not familiar with this may not realise that this newsletter contains a valuable Prayer Resource Guide, prepared by Father Paul Maloney, our national chaplain. Anyone may access this by contacting Judith or Mary.

When we gather as Friends of St. Augustine we are connecting with the wisdom of one of the Fathers of the Church, one whose extensive writings, although from ancient times are so relevant to our lives and spiritual development today. His words speak of the common circumstances of the human condition, of hopes and frailties and our need to discover 'a God within'. He sees this as taking place in a community, in a gathering of friends with a common purpose. So when we meet we are learning together, sharing our understanding and insights and seeking God together.

Judith Duncan

ST JOSEPH'S OUTREACH SERVICES REPORT

Dear Parishioners, friends and supporters of SJOS,

I am pleased to report that the past 12 months has been a very busy, successful and most fulfilling journey for all involved in the management and co-ordination of our many services and activities which support the homeless, the hungry and the marginalised in our community.

In the context of the many services SJOS provides as an Incorporated Association registered with Consumer Affairs Vic (Associations Incorporated Reform Act 2012), it's important to list our purposes:

- To provide emergency, low cost accommodation for those who are homeless, destitute and marginalised
- To provide staple food supplies to those in need within our community
- To assist those living in poverty, the aged, sick or infirm
- Wherever possible, to assist the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

Our 12 transitional units and crisis shelter are packed to the gunnels! In recent years, the wait list for people seeking Public Housing grows ever longer and so too has the length of stay for our tenants. In the past a typical stay was 3-6 months, today it is more likely to be 12 months or beyond.

This has of course had the effect of reducing the total number of new tenants we can accommodate each year. We use the services of HomeGround Real Estate, a not for profit agency, to source our residents and to manage the rental process. This third party arrangement ensures the impartial selection of tenants and provides support for the residents enabling a much greater degree of privacy and independence.

Our residents span the broadest cultural and socio-economic divide. It is a privilege to be able to offer these people the opportunity to get their lives back into some sort of order. We often receive very touching thank you cards from the residents, that certainly give us a real injection of energy and a true sense of satisfaction.

Financially we start this fiscal year with some money in the bank. Not a lot, but with our continuing fundraising initiatives and the donor support we receive from a number of dear friends, businesses and the broader philanthropic sector, we are confident we can generate sufficient funds to meet our current operating costs – rates, power, water, etc. Maintaining a large building of 12 units and our Crisis Shelter is our largest ongoing cost by far. We currently need to install a new heating facility throughout the building. We estimate that it will cost in the order of \$60,000. Other general maintenance also needs to be carried out – general painting, replacement of essential furniture (bedding etc.) and the proposed refurbishment of our crisis shelter, in order to be able to accommodate larger family groups. This shelter is an ideal facility for asylum seeker families who, of recent times, have been staying there. This will be a costly project but one that is high on our agenda. So we have some serious fundraising projects ahead of us.

Our fundraising functions are also key to maintaining our engagement with our many friends, supporters and the wider community. Fr Michael Sullivan described a participant's comment at our recent Winter High Tea fundraiser as "as much a friendraiser as a fundraiser".

On behalf of our committee, thank you to Ben and Margaret Lochtenberg for inviting us into your home for a very relaxed cocktail party as a thank you for our volunteers. Your continuing support over many years has helped to keep us focused.

Volunteers

At the very core of our being is Volunteerism. SJOS does not have any paid staff so what has been achieved over the past 17 years can be directly attributed to the work of the men and women who have come together to make it all happen.

For our volunteers it is a wonderful opportunity to establish and grow close friendships with like-minded people. It is surprising how friendships can be forged while cleaning one of our units or working on one of our sausage sizzle fundraisers!

A Call to Arms

I have intentionally spent quite some time listing and expanding on what we do. While we have many wonderful volunteers, the reality is we are at a point where we need more volunteers. We have much work to do and in order to achieve our goals and objectives and to help spread the load, could I ask you to consider joining us. If you are already involved, perhaps you may know someone who might like to come on board. If you would like to talk to us I can be contacted on Mob: 0418 596 730; Email: b.mallon@bigpond.com , or you can contact Bernadette Dennis on Email: info@sjos.org.au ; Telephone: 03 9866 7888. Bernadette and I would be very happy to meet with you.

These are some of the areas with which we need additional assistance:

- Additional Board Members to help share the load. Management and accounting experience would be very helpful. We meet monthly.
- Volunteer Coordinator to assist with drawing up and managing our various volunteer schedules and rosters.
- We need more help with our Food Store and Bread Bank. The collection and packaging of food and bread is a weekly commitment.
- The weekly cleaning of our accommodation facility and the units themselves as our residents move on.
- Fundraising/Grants Committee. Assisting us in the development of submissions and presentations to prospective donors - service organisations, businesses, trusts and foundations and philanthropic sector in general.
- Our Community Garden. Someone with a 'green thumb' to manage and develop this important project. Just a few hours a week would assist us greatly.

Finally it remains for me to thank everyone who has supported us in so many different ways throughout the year. I'm reminded of what Chuck Feeney, one of America's largest philanthropists once said about people who give of their time and money to humanitarian causes – "They don't work for thanks, they just need to know that their contribution has made a real difference".

We can assure you that your contribution to SJOS has certainly done just that.

Yours sincerely,
Brian Mallon (President)

THE STABLES UNIT CRISIS SHELTER

During 2014, the stables unit was home to 13 adults and 8 children. Five of the adults were single mothers fleeing from unsafe situations where family violence was the cause. Their children were aged between 2 years & 7 years. Two of these families were asylum seekers who were also seeking respite from family violence. The uncertainty of trying to gain permanent residency in a foreign country coupled with the lack of finance and homelessness puts extraordinary pressure on families who are fleeing problems in their country of origin. Unfortunately this often leads to domestic violence which further fragments these families.

One such family consisted of a mother dealing with cancer, her adult daughter and son. The son suffered from a severe intellectual disability. This small family had travelled from the other side of the world to escape family violence and political upheaval. On arrival at the stables unit, the daughter cried with relief to find such a safe, clean place where her mother could recuperate from her cancer treatment. I recently heard that this family had been accepted as permanent residents, the mother's treatment is progressing well, the daughter is looking forward to attending university and the son is now receiving support through the disability scheme. A positive ending to such a challenging journey for them.

Both asylum seeking families were referred to us by the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project or BASP.

At the present time we are hosting another of their families, a young couple expecting their first child who have only recently been released after 11 months in detention.

Due to changes in the Residential Tenancies Act, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the Parish to operate the Stables Unit in the same manner as in the past. Because of this 2015 will see us begin to explore new options for the use of this building. Over the last two years, we have identified a great need for accommodation for the families of those who have seriously ill loved ones in the Alfred Hospital. Gentrification of the South Yarra area has led to a decline in the availability of affordable accommodation for those wanting to be close enough to provide support to inpatients. At the present time \$150 per night appears to be the lowest rental accommodation in the area. As a result of this, the Augustinian Fathers have played host to several relatives of Alfred patients and the demand appears to be increasing. This is one idea being considered for the future of the stables unit.

Our thanks go to all those volunteers who have helped us to service the unit over the past year, to Toni Stuart, Parish Secretary who continues to assist me with its management and to the members of SJOS who support the project with financial and hands on assistance.

Carole McNally

Business Manager

EMERGENCY FOOD STORE AND BREAD COLLECTION

Let me begin with a few statistics.

Client Status	2013	2014	2015 (up to 3 June)
Total Emergency Relief grocery Clients assisted	307	227	227
average no. of visits per client	3.2	5.6	2.1
Clients receiving ER groceries each two months or more often	58	n/a	68
no. of bread items (loaves/bag of rolls) dispensed per week	310, but varies widely		

This year the previous financial aid distributed by the Stonnington West Emergency Relief Network Incorporation (S.W.E.R.N.I.), by which we were able to provide grocery items for our deserving clients, has dried up. Fortunately the tireless fundraising efforts of Bernadette Dennis have stepped up and filled the breach.

To meet the growing food needs in our community we continue to be fortunate enough to enjoy strong relationships with Bakers Delight Prahran, Bakers Delight Elsternwick and South Yarra Community Bakery during 2015, keeping our 24/7 bread freezer stocked. Forming a partnership with FareShare has allowed us to offer a healthy and sustainable range of frozen casseroles to client families during these winter months, whilst Second Bite has continued to provide us with fresh produce on a weekly basis. We thank these generous organisations who rescue surplus nutritious fresh food and donate it to us for distribution to people in need. Along with our groceries, this excess food relieves the financial pressures facing many who seek assistance through our services.

Collecting produce and bread, packing bread, shopping for groceries and grocery stocktaking are the behind the scene jobs that volunteers perform on a weekly basis to keep the food store and 24/7 bread freezer stocked. Then there are the many hours that volunteers spend on weekends in the food store assisting the needy and restocking the food store at the end of a shift. I thank you all for assisting with this task and from personal experience know that this time is very much valued by all who gather to serve those in need and enjoy the friendship of one another.

These services are dependent on more than fifty volunteers from within the parish and a big thank you to all for your time and support in assisting the vulnerable and lonely in our community.

I also thank Beb Larsen and her “Knitters of the Round Table” who have again knitted many blankets, children’s jumpers and beanies as gifts to the needy. Beb is an amazing woman who turns 100 this year, and her creative ladies enjoy their craft, friendship and laughter together and the birthday celebrations that happen frequently.

I also mention the generous teens of other parishes who have made a solid contribution to St Joseph’s through our Youth Engagement Team programme. These youth regularly spend a full day helping us with maintenance and thus enabling our ‘outreach dollar’ to go further.

As a new chum fortunate enough to join the St Joseph’s team at the end of February, I was stunned to see the breadth, depth and sincerity of the outreach offered by you the parishioners. The level of this parish outreach has few peers anywhere in Australia, and I concur with Wilfrid Cardinal Napier who said in May that it may well be *anywhere in the world*, especially for a parish of this size.

I thank all those parishioners, schools and businesses who have donated grocery items to the food store during the year. We thank S.J.O.S. and S.W.E.R.N.I for providing the funding which keeps this service up and running and we look forward to continuing our relationships with all of our suppliers in 2015-2016.

Chris Ryan
Food store and Bread Coordinator

THE STONNINGTON BUS

Four parishioners and one stand by driver faithfully transport several parishioners to Mass on Sunday mornings by bus. We thank the Stonnington Council for providing this mini bus through the Council ‘In Kind Community Grant’ which we have been recipients of for 12 years. We thank the patrons for their readiness to be assisted and drivers for their eagerness to make Sunday Liturgy accessible to fellow parishioners.

There are several vacant seats on the bus at present. This service is available to any parishioner needing transport and we ask you to spread the word to those you may think need transport and assistance in getting to our Sunday morning liturgy. For further information please contact Joyce at the Parish Office.

Joyce Flint
Pastoral Associate

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

The Parish Social Justice Committee has had a very stimulating and educational year. Our purpose is to raise consciousness and promote awareness in the Parish community about Social Justice, facilitate education and discussion around particular issues and to coordinate advocacy and action on these issues.

To guide us in our discussions and reflections, we have adopted '**See, Evaluate, Act**', a process for social justice groups created by the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council.

Our activities are intended to complement the tremendous practical work done by the volunteers involved in the existing St Joseph's Outreach Services.

To this end we hosted a BBQ for the SJOS Emergency Housing residents, to provide friendship and help break down barriers. We also supported one of the residents, a young refugee who was doing Year 12 and helped him negotiate the university application system and find temporary part-time work. He is now in his first year at Monash.

We read and discussed Pope Francis's '*The Joy of the Gospel*', and after reflecting on this important work as a group, developed a summary of some practical applications for the Parish community, and purchased copies to sell on to interested parishioners.

Sometime local parishioner, Susan Howe, attended one of our meetings and described the work of 'POSHU', the Project Of Self Help Uganda, an NGO she has set up to help combat poverty and disadvantage in Uganda by providing education especially for women. Her story is both extraordinary and inspiring.

We are about to commence **Parish Conversations**, an informal bi-monthly event on a range of topics, featuring a guest speaker followed by questions and general discussion. The first 'Conversation' will be on Sunday, July 19, after the 10.30 Mass. Susan Howe will be the speaker and her topic will be her aid work in Uganda.

Our group meets from 7.30 – 9.00 pm in the library in the Parish Centre on the third Wednesday of every month (except January). We advertise our meetings and topics in the Parish Bulletin. All are welcome to attend from both the Parish and broader communities.

We are always looking for new members, so why don't you come to one of our monthly meetings to see what we are about?

Bill Bateman Inaugural Chair 2011-April 2015

Contact: Parish Office Tel 98269677 Email: secretary@parishofsouthyarra.org.au

Note: on behalf of the Parish, the Social Justice Committee would like to thank Bill for his commitment in leading the group over the last three years as inaugural Chair.

John Flint is the current Chair

THE BARRY LIBRARY

The Library received a further fifty nine items (books, pamphlets, cd's and dvd's) into the collection this year. We are pleased to have welcomed more members who are making use of the library.

The library continues to be used by RCIA, Friends of St Augustine, Post-Lenten Programs. First Communion and Confirmation preparation and school groups for workshops and retreats.

We are always ready to receive donations of books on Catechetics, Church History, Parish History, Social Justice and children's religious books to expand the library.

PARISH ARCHIVES

Work on sorting and documenting the archives is now complete and will now be a maintenance task.

We are now able to assist parishioners, former parishioners and others to research their family history if they had a family member who was married, baptised or confirmed in St Joseph's parish.

Linda Williams and Genine McCarthy
Librarian/Archivists

ST THOMAS AQUINAS JUBILEE

During 2015, our beautiful and historic St Thomas Aquinas Church continued to share with its parishioners and visitors its magnificent ambience, liturgy and care. And on February 15th, a milestone in our Church's history was reached when parishioners came together, during the Jubilee Celebrations, to share in celebrating its first 100 years.

Fr Abel van der Veer OSA, accompanied by Frs Gerry Dullard OSA, Michael Sullivan OSA and Barry Caldwell, who served in the parish in 1971-1973, led the celebrations with the Centenary Mass of Thanksgiving. Also pleasing for many of our longer serving parishioners was to see Fr Brendan Donohue join us for Mass – Fr Donohue served in the parish in the 1960s.

At the end of Mass, a presentation was made to fellow parishioner Mary Gaynor in recognition of her many years of service as Sacristan at St Thomas Aquinas. All gathered after Mass, for a garden party held in the Church's gardens, which was very well-attended.

The two Saturdays prior to the Jubilee celebrations, working-bees were organised to freshen-up our Church and its gardens. Participants in the working-bees have every reason to be pleased with their efforts. Their attention to detail and plenty of willing energy and time made our Church and its gardens look magnificent. So impressive was the result that we are planning to organise annual working-bees and introduce them to St Joseph's Church, as well. Thank you to all the participants and donors, your contributions are greatly appreciated and you helped to make the Jubilee Celebration a great success.

As we are all aware, the Church building is aging and will benefit from some restoration and maintenance work and so the Parish Pastoral Council is investigating what needs to be done and how best to manage the work. The Pastoral Council will keep parishioners informed as matters progress. There are many in our parish who have come together, over the generations, to make our Church 'a community' during its first 100 years. There are the contributions made by the Welcomers, Commentators and Lectors, Musicians, Singers, Eucharistic Ministers, Collectors, Gift Bearer and Sacristans, for example. We also have many parishioners who make financial contributions. And when we combine those contributions with the dedication, commitment and pastoral care of our Priests, we rightly celebrate what St Thomas Aquinas is today: a beautiful place in which to worship our Lord.

By Andrew Balcerzak
St Thomas Aquinas Jubilee Coordinator
Member of Parish Pastoral Council

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES IN OUR PARISH

It is great fun to participate in the **Priory Dinners**, initiated and organized by Fr Abel on the last Friday of each month. If you haven't yet been to one of these nights – with the accompanying task of helping with catering for the next month's meal, then I strongly encourage you to do so. It's a great way to meet new parishioners. Similarly the **Saturday night dinners** organized by Joyce Flint and helpers, are always happy and enjoyable occasions.

This year we have enjoyed two excellent **concerts** in St Joseph's. Thanks to Janet Maher, who is a member of the David Ashton Smith Singers, we listened to a splendid array of choral music in March.

May saw the return performance of The Healing Notes Piano Trio, organized by Samantha Leung and her two doctor friends, Jean McMullin and Catherine Brennan, who presented another most enjoyable concert this year. This was followed, yet again, by a delicious afternoon tea provided by Kathryn Leung.

Our warmest thanks to both groups of musicians; we hope they will continue to make lovely music for us into the future, and thank them for their generous donations to SJOS activities.

The Parish Barbecue in December was another great event, attended by a large number of parishioners and families. While the weather kept us indoors, the sparkling spirit filled the day with enjoyment and the lucky winners of the many raffle prizes went home with extra smiles on their faces. The day raised over \$800 which went to making Christmas hampers for people in need. Thanks again to all the donors for the day and all who made the day so successful.

The Parish Chronicle, organized with great diligence by Fr Abel, records each of our parish activities and we enjoy reading them as they are published.

The culmination of this year's social activities was the celebration of our much loved parishioner **Beb Larsen's 100th birthday** on 15th July. Beb and her late husband, Norman, moved to South Yarra in the early 1940s, renting houses in Osborne and Fawkner Sts. before moving into their own home in Ralston St Where Beb has lived for over 64 years. Their children, John and Nola were born in South Yarra. Over all these years Beb has been a tireless worker for our parish, still contributing to our outreach to people in need through her Knitters of the Round Table group with lovely knitted children's clothing and knee rugs. On July 12th we honoured Beb at Mass, celebrated by Frs Michael Sullivan and John Barry OSA, who spoke of Beb's marvellous contributions to the life of the parish for close to 70 years. Then Beb continued her celebrations in the parish hall with her family and close friends. Well done Beb! We are proud of you and we love you.

Di Brebner

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The members of the Finance Committee for the last financial year were Fr Abel Van Der Veer, Carole McNally (Business Manager), Paul Mulqueen, Rick Talbot, Toniette D'Andrea & John Flint. Mr. John Quin of Quin & Bourke prepared the Annual Financial Report for the Archdiocese and we were joined by Fr. Michael Sullivan on occasion.

OPERATING INCOME & EXPENDITURE

For the first time in many years, the Parish Finances have broken even in 2014. Although the books show a deficit of \$15,000, a small amount of income was outstanding into January 2015 which meant that we did in fact operate on an even keel last year. This is an extraordinary feat given that we are still required to maintain our buildings and continue with our activities as in past years. The major influences on this result were due to an increase in rental income and an extremely positive result to the thanksgiving campaign held in October 2014. Rental income is now the biggest source of revenue for the Parish, closely followed by Thanksgiving donations. Over the past few years we have endeavoured to increase the usage of the Parish Centre in particular and to that end, have in 2015 employed 'A schools liaison officer,' Mr. Christopher Ryan, to concentrate on building the business from Catholic Secondary Schools throughout the state. 2014 saw an increase in rental income of \$15,000. We expect this to increase again in 2015. One of the challenges we faced was the decline in interest rates. This has meant that our small investment has not provided the boost to Parish finances that we enjoyed in past years. For the first time in 9 years, The Catholic Development Fund has offered competitive rates which has seen us transfer our investment back to them.

The thanksgiving campaign, 'We give thanks' resulted in an increase of almost 40% in our congregational donations, a figure of almost \$17,000.

On the expenditure side, we reigned in our renovation budget considerably, only carrying out essential maintenance works on our buildings. This was a change from recent years when we undertook many major renovations including works to St. Joseph's Church, the Priory and the Outreach units. Once again we will embark on some more major renovation works to St. Thomas Aquinas during 2015 with essential roof repairs and an upgrade on the organ to be addressed.

THANKS

Our thanks to all the members of the Parish Finance Committee, to St. Joseph's Outreach Services for their financial support and to our parishioners for their support of our Thanksgiving campaign.

Carole McNally

Parish of South Yarra Financials

as at 31st December 2014

with Budget comparison 2015

Income

		2015	2014	2013
Thanksgiving	T	100000	96810	79783
Interest	I	41800	29829	64972
Rental Income	R	126000	122977	108423
Other	O	24000	42545	3079
Total Income		291800	292161	256257

Other includes Donations, Grants, Bequests, etc.

Expenditure

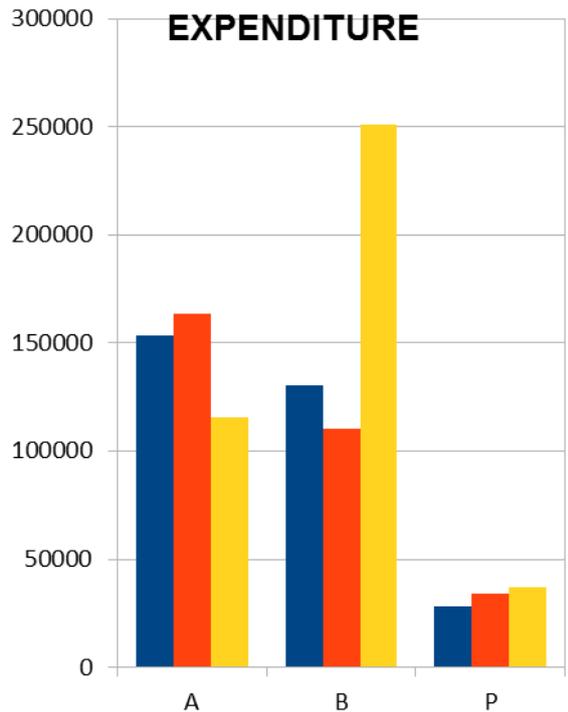
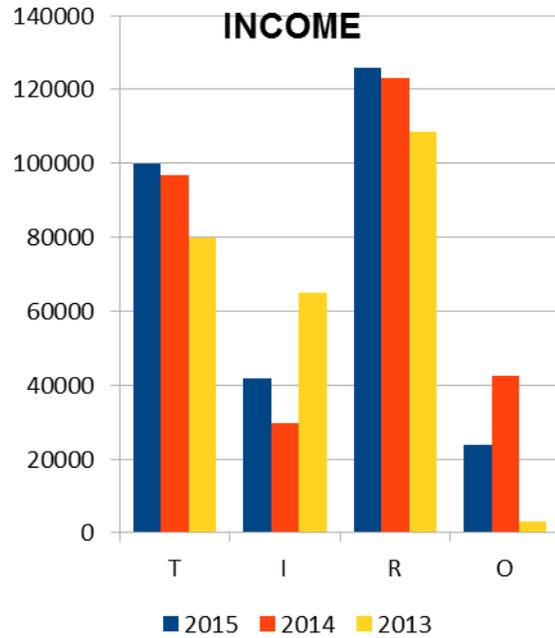
		2015	2014	2013
Administration	A	153290	163603	115719
Buildings Property	B	130420	110388	250865
Pastoral T/giving	P	28090	34009	37016
Total expenditure		311800	308000	403600
Staffing (included in Depts)	S	119700	98617	98683

Net Operating Surplus (Deficit)

		2015	2014	2013
Administration		-81570	-91229	-50693
Fundraising		24000	0	3025
Thanksgiving		83000	94789	74337
Property		-9600	12589	-142442
Pastoral		-37930	-31988	-31570
Total Parish		-22100	-15839	-147343

Balance Sheet

\$'000		2015	2014	2013
Current Assets		1231	1251	1266
Fixed Assets		11814	11814	11814
Liabilities		19	19	19
Net Assets		13026	13046.0	13061





ST JOSEPH'S PARISH CENTRE
30 Fitzgerald St, South Yarra
P.O. Box 21 South Yarra VIC 3141
Tel 03 9826 9677 Fax 03 9804 7813

MASS TIMES

St Joseph's Church

30 Fitzgerald St, South Yarra
Sat Vigil 6pm; Sunday 10.30am
Weekdays: Tues & Thurs 10am; Sat 9am
Communion Services: Wed & Fri 10am

St Thomas Aquinas' Church

43 Bromby St South Yarra
Sunday 9am
Wed and Fri 12.45pm
Communion Services: Tues & Thurs 12.45pm



Augustinian Community
Parish of South Yarra
Fr Abel van der Veer OSA PP
Fr Michael Sullivan OSA: Prior
Fr Gerald Dullard OSA