



parishofsouthyarra



# Under the care of the Augustinians

# Annual Report 2015-2016

## 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

## 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 marginalized 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.

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## **PARISH PRIEST'S REPORT**

It is only at this time of the year when I need to sit down to write this Annual Report that the recognition comes of how much has been happening over these past 12 months and the impact this has had on the Parish.

One item which has struck me forcibly is the impact changes in personnel and leading volunteer participation has on the Parish. On the one hand there are the gifts new blood brings to the Parish, and an example of this is Fr. Michael's concern to help deepen and widen the opportunities for spiritual growth during key seasons of the Church's liturgical year, such as the Advent, Lent and post-Easter periods, which led to the introduction of a Giving Tree in Advent, a series of Home Masses in Advent and Lent, and a Parish Retreat Day post-Easter.

On the other hand, you have the retirement of Joyce Flint as our Parish Pastoral Associate at the end of last year. Her engagement with leading the Advent and Lenten discussion groups is sorely missed, as is the lowered involvement with the RCIA, no longer an ex-officio member of the Parish Council, and the other assortment of hands-on occupations she used to manage outside of her work commitments. To all of this we tip our hat in gratitude.

Last year our Social Justice Group sponsored a number of Parish Conversations where Joyce and her husband John took a leading role in the organizing and arranging of these, but so far this year they have failed to eventuate, not for lack of interest, but through change of circumstances and time constraints not having the opportunity to put in the effort needed. The same can be said of the Spaghetti Nights, which too often depend on just one or two people taking responsibility.

Meanwhile we have welcomed two new faces to our Parish Team. Ona Stewart came to take over Joyce's role as Pastoral Associate, and has already put her own imprint on that role through her engagement with the families of children coming to the Children's Liturgy, of those being prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, 1<sup>st</sup> Communion and Confirmation, while also reaching out to the families of children who do not attend Catholic schools.

Br. Percival Severe osa joined our Augustinian community in February, initially to complete a 10 week Clinical Pastoral Education course at the Austin Hospital. He had already completed his theological and spiritual formation and is looking forward to his Ordination. Meanwhile he will remain with us for the remainder of this year at least, on Pastoral Experience. When and where his Ordination to the Diaconate and the Priesthood will take place is yet to be decided.

Just before Christmas we farewelled Fr. Pat Bourke osa, who had been a member of our Augustinian community since 1999, but spent the last 5 years in Aged Palliative Care as he struggled with dementia and failing health. He is remembered especially for his Pastoral Care of the Sick at the Alfred, and of the Aged at Bethlehem Care facility.

As part of a general round-up I would like to draw your attention to the changing composition of those who come to St. Joseph's and St. Thomas Aquinas' for Mass on the weekends. We see a substantial number of new, younger faces, young adults who have moved into the Parish, as well as some families with young and infant children, while the average number of those attending Mass is consistently above 250, so we're more than holding our own.

The Parish Pastoral Council saw 6 new members taking office, while Andrew Balcerzak was elected as Chair. We are blessed with the experience and insights they bring to the spiritual and material needs and growth of our parish community.

Maintenance work in the Parish saw the fence at St. Thomas Aquinas renewed and the grounds improved, while at St. Joseph the heritage-listed rear wall to the property was repointed. In the Parish Centre the aging telephone system, damaged in a lightning strike, was able to be replaced, thanks to a successful insurance claim.

St. Joseph's Outreach Services, thanks to sterling work of the Exec Committee and its band of volunteers, continues its effort to meet a range of social needs in and beyond our Parish area. Especially the Foodstore is experiencing a substantial increase in numbers of people seeking its help.

Although struggling to raise sufficient volunteers to maintain our various ministries of Welcomers, Readers, Special Ministers of the Eucharist, Musicians, Sacristans, etc., the Parish continues to function well, attested to by the favourable comments of the many visitors who pass through our doors. A special word of appreciation to our tireless Liturgy Committee for their efforts and to the volunteers who maintain the Communion Services in both churches and in Aged Care & Nursing Homes, as well as to those who bring Holy Communion to the Alfred Hospital and the Housebound.

Finally, may I offer a heartfelt thanks to all who joined a celebration of my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in February. I certainly did not expect to reach this age, nor how physically well I feel, and I can only attribute that to the unfailing support of our Parish Staff in particular, and the encouraging expressions of appreciation from parish-wide. Being appointed here a good five years ago in semi-retirement mode, I feel it's time to return to that description, and have asked the leadership of the Australian Augustinian Province to relieve me of the administrative responsibility of the Parish, and to be allowed to serve out my appointment here as semi-retired assistant priest.

Lastly, while grateful to all who serve the Parish in any of the above ways, my thanks go out particularly to Frs. Gerry and Michael, and Br. Percival for their unfailing support; to our long-serving and efficient Business Manager, Carole McNally and to our practical and resourceful Parish Secretary, Toni Stuart, on whose skills I depend more than on anyone else; and to those members of the Parish Pastoral Council and other groups within the Parish, whose time for retirement had come as well.

Parish Priest.

Fr. Abel van der Veer osa.

## **PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL REPORT**

The responsibilities of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) include promotion of the Christian community model, to assist the Parish Priest with advice in relation to the operation of the parish, planning future needs and day-to-day activities.

I have had the privilege of chairing the 2015-2016 PPC, which comprise of the following continuing members: Kelly Barnes, Jorge Sanchez, Andrew Balcerzak, Savina D'Souza, Bernadette Dennis, Joyce Flint and new members: Tony Dawson, Clare Taylor, Joanna Flynn, Paul Simmons, Robert Huggins, De-Arne Darby.

The executive elected for the year were:

Andrew Balcerzak – Chairperson

Savina D'Souza – Deputy Chairperson

Kelly Barnes - Secretary

De-Arne Darby – Deputy Secretary

The members of PPC are elected to a two year term and half of the PPC retires each year making opening for new members to join. In this way the PPC is continually rejuvenated and provides opportunity for all parishioners to be involved in the management of the Parish.

In addition to the PPC members, ex-officio members attend the monthly PPC meeting and report on their respective roles such as: Finance, Liturgy, St Joseph Outreach Services (SJOS), Food Store, Haven Foundation as well as project based roles such as Parish Conversations, Social Justice Group, Grass Roots Project.

Our Parish flagship project SJOS continues to provide wonderful support for a wide range of the most vulnerable members of our community from within the parish and beyond. We are most grateful to all the volunteers and managers who make it possible.

We are also thankful to all people, from within and outside the Parish, who diligently and often participate and support our activities such as the Working Bees and Parish BBQ.

As we are all aware, the Church buildings are 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 with the limited funding available. The Pastoral Council will keep parishioners informed as matters progress.

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 can be proud of having two beautiful churches in which to worship our Lord.

My sincere thanks go to the PPC and ex-officio members who have generously given their time and energy to ensure that issues facing the Parish are addressed promptly and professionally.

I wish to take this opportunity to formally thank for the dedication and leadership of our priests, Fr Abel van der Veer, Fr Michael Sullivan and Fr Gerry Dullard as well as our Pastoral Associates and Administration managers.

Andrew Balcerzak  
PPC Chairperson

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

One of the measures of a Parish's vitality is the effort put into, and the need for, Sacramental Preparation. While since 2002 we no longer have a Catholic School attached to the Parish, and therewith no regular stream of children who need to be prepared for 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation, 1<sup>st</sup> Eucharist and Confirmation, the need is still there, and so each year we continue to offer the opportunity for this preparation, - as well as for the Sacraments of Baptism and Marriage. While Funerals are not strictly Sacraments, they are an extension of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, and so need to be prepared for as well.

Accordingly, we offered a 5-6 session program for each of the Sacraments usually received at School age, and prepared 3 young people for 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation, 3 for 1<sup>st</sup> Eucharist (Communion), and 2 young people and 4 adults for Confirmation. Our Pastoral Associates, Joyce Flint and Ona Stewart took responsibility for the preparation of the children.

Through the RCIA we prepared a further 2 adults for their Reception into the Catholic Church and admitted them to the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. They had already been baptised in another Denomination.

We had 27 Baptisms, whereof 16 were celebrated at St. Joseph's and 11 at St. Thomas Aquinas. All but 7 of these were not living within our Parish Boundaries, but had some connection through family or their parents having been married in either church.

28 weddings took place in our Parish, with 22 at St. Thomas Aquinas and 6 at St. Joseph. Only 5 of these actually resided within the Parish. In 21 of these weddings one of the priests in our Parish officiated, while 7 couples arranged their own priest. All couples are required to do a Marriage Preparation Course, usually provided by Catholic Care. The Parish hosts a large percentage of young adults born overseas, many of whom wish to return to their home country for their marriage. In this way the priests in the Parish assist them with their marriage preparation and with the Church documentation to obtain any Dispensations or Permissions required. 10 couples were assisted in this way.

We had 8 Funerals, 3 at St. Thomas Aquinas, 5 at St. Joseph, 4 of whom were current parishioners.

Thank you to all who gave of their time, skill and insight in helping to prepare those in need of preparation and accompaniment.

Fr. Abel van der Veer osa.

Parish Priest.

## **LITURGY AND PRAYER**

Parish liturgy continues to be at the heart of all our parish activity each week and there is a wonderfully warm and gracious spirit of welcome extended to all parishioners and visitors each weekend at the Masses. 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. One of the most heart-warming aspects of the Christmas Eve Family Mass is always the annual re-enactment of the Christmas Gospel by some of the children, assisted by all the children in the congregation for the singing of "Silent Night". Each year the celebration of the Easter Triduum touches our hearts deeply as we reflect on and celebrate the great mysteries of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The Memorial Mass for our deceased relatives and friends, celebrated each November in the Parish Memorial Garden, is always a moving and memorable occasion.

Our heartfelt thanks to all the parishioners who work behind the scenes to prepare the church for our celebrations: Lolita Lin, Kiat Lim and Sandra Maroney for the beautiful floral décor at St Joseph's; Connie Delphin and Jenny Jacob (6PM Saturdays) Anne Semple, Kathryn Leung, Jemina Fernandez and Antonella Papa (10.30am Sundays) Natalija Pajmon, David Quinn, Juileene McNally and Eugene

Setiawan (weekdays) for their work as sacristans at St Joseph's, while Mary and Michael Shaw lead the team at St Thomas Aquinas Church on Sundays.

Our thanks are extended to all the parishioners who take their turns as Welcomers, Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers at all Masses. We thank Joyce Flint for faithfully organizing the various liturgy rosters throughout her term as Pastoral Worker, and our thanks are continued to Ona Stewart who took up the task when she was appointed to this important parish role last December. Thanks to Alice Power for her share with Di Brebner in the weekly writing of the Sunday commentaries and Prayers of Intercession for Sunday Masses.

Music plays such an integral part in the joyful and prayerful participation each weekend our dedicated musicians lead the congregations in song at the three Masses. Our thanks to Amy Yu and Ros MacPherson at St Thomas Aquinas; Amy Yu, Claryn and Jocelyn Kung, Savina and Alex D'Souza, Dianne Lazaroo, Adrianna Chai and Magdalena Ong (6pm Saturdays) Antoniette D'Andrea, Francis Hogan, Sarah Coghlan, Albert Yu, Perlita Pepe, Sandra Moroney, Elizabeth Yu, Ann Maree Pagon and Di Brebner (10.30am Sundays) and Celina Da Silva for her dedication to the Powerpoint preparations of the hymns used at Mass. Several of our musicians have had to resign their positions over the past year because of work and study commitments or transfers overseas. Special thanks to Albert Yu, Sarah Coghlan, Claryn and Jocelyn Kung for their regular commitment to playing and singing at Mass. We wish them well in all their endeavours and we shall miss them and their wonderful music making and we urge other parishioners to consider joining the music groups so that this ministry can continue.

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 and are a wonderful source of shared prayer between the four communities.. Our parish will host the group on the Feast of the Transfiguration in August this year.

The annual celebrations of the Sacraments during Sunday Masses are always an experience that touches us deeply. Thanks to our priests and Ona Stewart for preparing the children for First Eucharist and Confirmation

Finally, our heartfelt thanks to our much loved Augustinian Fathers, Abel van der Veer, Michael Sullivan and Gerry Dullard, for their prayerful, inspiring presiding at our liturgies and in their wonderful ministry to us. We continue to be much blessed in them.

Di Brebner  
Chair, Liturgy Committee

## **CHILDREN'S SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Sacraments are community and sacred events that help us all to enter more fully into the mysteries of our Catholic Faith. As a faith community we can each support the children and their families who enroll in these programs by prayer. All programs are designed to enhance parental involvement in the preparation of the children for the Sacrament.

In the year 2016 the Sacramental program commenced on the 14th of April.

The program is mainly designed for parents who send their children to non-Catholic schools or anybody wishing their children to receive Sacraments at our parish.

If parents are practicing Catholics they are able to do much of the preparation themselves. We provide them with the Sacramental preparation resources/books.

The schedule for the Sacramental program is as follows:

The First Reconciliation Classes 14<sup>th</sup> April-5<sup>th</sup> May on Thursdays at our parish Library 4 p.m-4:30p.m .

The First Eucharist 19<sup>th</sup> May-16<sup>th</sup> June on Thursdays at our parish Library 4p.m -4:30p.m

The Confirmation 14<sup>th</sup> July-11<sup>th</sup> August on Thursdays at our parish Library 4p.m -4:30p.m

Sacramental Celebration dates for the year 2016 :

12<sup>th</sup> May-First Reconciliation.

19 June- First Communion

14 August- Confirmation

### **Religious education classes**

In addition to our Sacramental program we implemented the first religious education classes. The classes are taught once a month jointly with the Sacramental group children on Thursdays at 4p.m-4:30p.m at our parish library.

In August the Religious education classes will be conducted on Sunday mornings at 9:50a.m-10:25a.m before the Sunday Mass once a month at parish Coffee room.

Religious education classes are designed to reflect the Bible stories followed up by a set of activities created for younger and the older group of children participating.

The Sacramental program and Religious education classes are taught by our parish pastoral Associate Ona Stewart. Any parents wishing to enroll their child into our Religious education program are welcomed to do so any time.

Ona Stewart

Parish Pastoral Associate

## **CHILDREN'S LITURGY**

The Children's Liturgy takes place on the first and third Sunday of each month excluding school holidays and long weekends. I-Lynne Lee and I alternatively take these sessions.

The planned sessions are based on the programme: **The Liturgy of the Word with Children** by Katie Thompson. Each lesson has a focus, a Gospel reading, a reflection and an activity. Resources are prepared to accommodate the varied ages of children who attend. The children's ages vary between 5 and 12 years, with approximately 10 children attending each of the sessions.

The sessions allow the children of our parish to experience a deeper understanding and to participate in the liturgy through Scripture texts, signs, symbols and activities. The children are also given the opportunity to interact with each other as we worship as a community.

Elizabeth Follacchio

## **FAMILY GROUP**

This year we started a new family meetups group for families from our parish who have young or teenage children.

The group is designed to meet each other on the weekends every two or three months. The plans of the meetup group are to celebrate seasonal celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, go out to the beach, zoo, botanical gardens, theatres or just simply gather together and have fun.

We had our first meetup this year on the 11th of June. Everybody brought a plate of food to share. The children party themes were: "My favorite costume" and "Monkey disco party". Children had many fun activities to do: playing fun games, doing crafts, playing with the playdough, face painting, making animal balloons. Everybody wore their favorite party costume and had lots of fun dancing in the monkey disco." It was very nice to meetup with the parents and the children from our parish.

Many thanks for the parents who helped to organize such a fun event and are willing to meetup and spend time together while raising their children according to our catholic values and faith.

Ona Stewart

Parish Pastoral Associate

## **PARISH VISITING**

Within our parish are many elderly, housebound and unwell parishioners who are no longer able to participate in our weekly Masses and it is our privilege to visit them at home and in the local Aged Care Centres. Fr Abel, Fr Michael and Ona Stewart do regular home visitations, the priests also offer the Sacrament of the Sick on a monthly basis as well as taking these parishioners Holy Communion. From time to time, other parishioners take Holy Communion to family members at home or in hospital.

Two Aged Care Centres are regularly visited; twice weekly Juileene McNally visits the patients in Mecwacare Trescowthick Centre in Prahran and takes them Holy Communion. On Thursdays Di Brebner leads a Communion Service for the Catholic patients at the Coppin Centre at the Royal Freemasons Aged Care Centre. As getting to Mass and connecting with the parish is beyond these patients, they do appreciate the opportunity to gather for prayer and Holy Communion, and they love to receive the parish bulletins which give them a sense of our parish life. Fr Michael visits both centres on a regular basis to celebrate Mass with them.

Di Brebner  
Parish Visitation Team

## **ALFRED HOSPITAL**

Our priests are on regular call to the Alfred Hospital where they administer the sacraments to patients who request them. These calls can come during both daytime and in the middle of the night and the dedication of Frs Abel and Michael to this ministry is most appreciated.

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. Over the course of a year, approximately 500 patients and their families are visited and offered Holy Communion by the dedicated band of parish Eucharistic Ministers to the Alfred. Many of these very ill patients express their heartfelt appreciation of this ministry. 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  
Parish of South Yarra: Alfred Hospital Liaison

## **FRIENDS OF ST AUGUSTINE IN THE PARISH OF SOUTH YARRA**

Our group in South Yarra continues to be challenged with health and personal issues but we maintain a positive commitment to our 2015/2016 focus on the words of Christ, "I have no other hands than yours". This was agreed on at our national meeting in Sydney in September, when leaders of groups of Friends from Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria came together to plan for the year to come. Sadly, the week after this meeting we came together with so many from the parish and beyond to farewell our beloved Isabel Cid, a most faithful and long-standing member of Friends who graced our meetings with her deep spirituality.

In December there was a happier occasion when Friends of St. Augustine, South Yarra, came together to remember and honour various friends at a Home Mass on the Feast of Christ the King. One person to be honoured was Beb Larsen, who celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on July 15, 2015 and many of us shared in the joyful celebration in the Parish Centre. Fr. Michael, in his homily, explained that Beb was well on her journey of life before this feast was instituted. He spoke of the times which caused the Vatican to bring the idea of Christ the King, the King of all Truth into being.

Many parishioners will remember the wonderful event of 2007 which was the National Congress for the Laity hosted by Friends of St. Augustine in the newly renovated and refurbished Parish Centre. This event was embraced by the parish and was one of the most successful Congresses ever held.

In 2016 Friends of St Augustine are planning for their 6<sup>th</sup> Congress with Day Seminars in all the Augustinian centres. The International Speaker Fr. Czar Emmanuel V. Alvarez, OSA, will travel to South Yarra and present this year's Congress theme:

### **By Believing, Run With Me.**

This will take place in the Parish Centre on July 30, from 9.00am to 4.00pm, and will provide an opportunity for members of the parish and the wider community to come together in this Jubilee Year of Mercy to plan and reflect on our spiritual journey in our daily lives.

Judith Duncan

## ST JOSEPH'S OUTREACH SERVICES

St Joseph's Outreach Services, Inc. is a registered not for profit charity, affiliated to the Parish of South Yarra, and when established in 1998, the founders were members of the parish. Membership has now reached out to include supporters from surrounding communities, but the organisation still rents premises from the Parish in order to provide the outreach services that are not funded by any state and federal government body.

As a mission statement, SJOS (St Joseph's Outreach Services) is committed to providing transitional housing and support services to those in need regardless of race or creed, and to work towards relieving the effects of poverty in our community. We have three pillars, three core values, enabling us to provide **Shelter, Opportunity** and **Support** to the disadvantaged and marginalised in our community.

**SHELTER** is provided through the twelve (12) transitional housing units SJOS created in the old school building that was St Joseph's Primary School. There are five (5) one bedroom units and seven (7) studio units and they are all self-contained and fully furnished. As SJOS is a totally volunteer organisation, and due to the challenges involved with the Residency Act, SJOS uses an outside organisation to provide possible residents for the units. This organisation, HomeGround Real Estate Agency, is part of Launch Housing, Victoria's largest community service provider for housing and homelessness support services. The names of these potential residents are submitted to this organisation by numerous charities and they are all in some stage of need for housing relief, whether through family breakdown, domestic violence, refugee status or financial grief. Unfortunately, as with the rest of Victoria's community housing, 33% of the residents of the SJOS Units have suffered some sort of dispute or domestic violence. The SJOS residents pay 17.5% of their Centrelink payment to SJOS as rent, and this averages at about \$75.00 per week, but this does not cover the cost of rent to the parish, the fee paid to HomeGround REA, rates, insurance, utilities, repair and replacement and maintenance.

The SJOS Transitional Housing Units are all fully furnished with communal laundries, but they also require additional maintenance services throughout the year, which require funding.

Unit 1: Required forensic cleaning due to the inability of the resident to keep the unit cleaned

Unit 2: Purchase of a new bed needed after damage, with new mattress

Unit 3: Furniture damaged but replaced by donated furniture

Unit 4: Long term tenant left and replacement of bedding required

Unit 5: Good tenancy record over the past year with minimal maintenance required

Unit 6: Complete refit of the unit required after long term resident had a damaging psychotic episode

Unit 7: Long term residency of mother with 2 small children. Single bed replaced through donation

Unit 8: Long term residency of mother with autistic son and minimal maintenance required

Unit 9: Challenging resident who violated tenancy agreement. Matter taken to VCAT

Unit 10: Long term resident, finally able to get private rental housing after a long wait. Good tenant

Unit 11: Chinese couple as long term residents finally received public housing. Good tenants

Unit 12: Frequent short term residents with minimal maintenance requirements. Good tenants

Shelter is also provided for crisis accommodation in the Stables Unit, behind the Priory. This unit, supported by SJOS volunteers and the Parish team, is used by the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Group and it is available for short term emergency housing relief on a complimentary basis.

**OPPORTUNITY** is at the core of what is provided by SJOS, with the units providing an established residential address for those previously homeless. The residents gain a place to be, a safe environment, in which to re-establish themselves while they wait for the application process for public housing to be organised. SJOS provides these formerly homeless residents the opportunity and a new chance to restart their lives, with easy access to shops, transport and support services. They get the opportunity to use the facilities of the Parish Centre, from the children's playground, the community garden, and the library with complimentary internet services.

**SUPPORT** is provided through the SJOS Food Store and the SJOS Bread Bank.

The Food Store provides those receiving Centrelink support payment with the chance to get a parcel of food once a month to supplement their family needs. The Food Store is open 3 days every week, except for public holidays and it is supported by SJOS volunteers who shop for the food staples, stock the shelves and work in the store. This parcel of food consists of ten (10) separate items, which include eggs and cheese, as well as staple food items, such as milk, pasta, rice, cereals, etc. SJOS funds the Food Store from funds supplied by various grants, donations and philanthropic support. In the Financial Year 2015/2016, year to date, SJOS has spent over \$15,000.00 in food store supplies, plus received food donations from various schools and support groups as well as the Christmas appeal from the non-denominational churches of Toorak. The food parcels provided by SJOS have supported over 1,000 visitors to the Food Store in the 2015/2016 Financial Year.

The Bread Bank provides frozen bread through the 2-way freezer, and the bread is collected, packaged and stocked by volunteers on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The bags of bread and rolls provided range from a couple of bags to carloads and the bread products are all packaged and sealed in freezer bags before storing in the freezers. The following bakeries have supported the SJOS Bread Bank and SJOS is most appreciative of their support.

Baker's Delight Prahran Central  
South Yarra Community Bakery  
Hootsen Bakery Conditorei Malvern  
Glicks Cakes and Bagels Malvern  
Brumby's Bakery Malvern  
Baked on Glenferrie Malvern

The 2015/2016 financial year for the Management Committee of St Joseph's Outreach Service, (SJOS) commenced with attendance at the Higgins Community Christmas in July celebration with the special guest speaker being Sir James Gobbo AC, CVO, QC, our SJOS patron. With the focus on volunteer services in our community, this event celebrated all that SJOS does, providing volunteer outreach services to the disadvantaged and marginalised in our community.

During the year, the volunteers of SJOS have supported the community through servicing all the outreach services we provide including cleaning the public areas of the units and completing the residency changeover cleaning, supporting the Food Store and the Bread Bank, as well as assisting with all the fundraising activities. Without volunteers, SJOS would not exist.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR:**

|                        |                                             |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Saturday, 8 August:    | Bunnings Sausage Sizzle                     |
| Tuesday, 11 August:    | Volunteer Meeting                           |
| Weekend 25/26 October: | Appeal Weekend                              |
| Sunday, 8 November:    | SJOS AGM                                    |
| Monday, 16 November:   | SJOS Film Night                             |
| December               | Higgins Christmas Appeal                    |
| 21 – 24 March          | Xavier Year 10 Community Services Programme |
| 14 – 17 April          | Volunteer Training Meeting                  |
| Weekend 28/29 May      | Appeal Weekend                              |

**GRANTS:** Sisters of Charity Therapeutic Garden Grant  
Central Deanery for Refugees and Asylum Seekers Group  
Stonnington Community Grants  
Stronger Communities Programme  
StreetSmart Grants

**DONATIONS:** Parishioners of Parish of South Yarra  
Philanthropic Trusts and Family Foundations  
Friends and Supporters of SJOS

Bernadette Dennis  
Secretary / Treasurer  
Management Committee  
St Joseph's Outreach Services

## **ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH YARRA**

Our activities have focused around three areas.

Our local South Yarra Christian community, coming together to share and celebrate our similarities in faith worship. We hosted a Mass on the Feast of the Transfiguration, Christ Church Anglican the Ascension Day, South Yarra Baptist the Epiphany, and All Saints Day at Hawksburn Anglican. At such events we realize that our areas of commonality far outweigh any differences that have arisen over time. It certainly adds to our regular prayer at Mass of Jesus desire for us to be "One with Him".

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) have had a very active program during the year. The Annual Jewish Catholic friendship dinner was again an outstanding event with Rabbi Fred Morgan, AM as the guest speaker on the topic "A Jewish Perspective on 50 Years of Nostra Aetate." The parish was represented with five of us attending. From the Grass Roots project last year has come about a dozen topics where distinguished speakers present well prepared lectures of a Sunday afternoon. Some topics attended were:

How Jesus the faithful Jew became the Christ of Christian Faith.

To the Jew First? New perspectives on Paul and Judaism.

Covenant? Jewish Covenant events, Christian Covenant legality.

Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia (JCMA) expands interfaith conversations to all three of the faiths based on Abraham to create cultures of peace, provide education through interfaith cooperation, towards ending religious intolerance. There were many highlights for the year. (JCMA.org.au)

Friendship walk attended by several hundred commenced at St Peters Anglican Church, then across the road to the East Melbourne Synagogue, and on to the Albanian Mosque at Carlton North. We enjoyed the ambience of the oldest Church in Melbourne, the "fiddler" music and dancing in the Synagogue, and the hospitality of the Mosque.

A Seder for Women, Celebration of the Jewish Festival of Passover led by Rabbi Allison Conyer. We were represented by two parishioners, who attended with a Moslem and a Catholic teenager.

The AGM of the Association heard guest speaker Dr Hass Dellal, OAM, on "Challenging Questions we need to ask ourselves".

We look forward to more interfaith events during the coming year. We hope to see you there too, keep your eyes open on reading the newsletter.

John Flint.

## **THE STABLES UNIT CRISIS SHELTER**

Over the last year, the Parish has worked in tandem with the Brigidine Sisters Asylum Seekers Project to house 5 sets of asylum seekers where there was no alternative housing options available to them.

These asylum seekers were from Malaysia, Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Vietnam. All were on temporary bridging visas which allowed them into the community but prevented them from any other Government support. Financially this makes these people very vulnerable. Unable to access Government housing and not permitted to work, they are unable to earn enough to source private rental accommodation. These asylum seekers have very few options left to them.

Two of the couples were expecting their first child, one family had a two year old with developmental problems and were expecting another child. Another of the families, who also had a small child, had gotten themselves into legal difficulties and it is likely that they have been deported since they left us. Two of the asylum seekers were single Ethiopian men.

During their stay in the Stables Unit, the Parish has provided these families with food and shelter and the staff in the Parish office have assisted them with paperwork and other details.

Currently the Parish is working with Marc Dixon, architect and Tony Dawson, retired Engineer to explore the options for re-purpose of the Stables building. Until such time as this project is ready, we will continue to work with the Brigidine's to provide accommodation and support to vulnerable asylum seekers.

Carole McNally

## **THE HAVEN**

The Haven Foundation continues to provide a happy and safe environment for 14 residents in their community in the old convent building opposite St. Joseph's church.

There was a special celebration this year on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the community's official opening in 2011. Around 60 people from the families and friends of the residents, as well as representatives from the Prahran Mission, volunteers and parishioners from our parish, came to celebrate the joyful occasion with the Haven residents and staff.

During the past five years the Haven community in South Yarra has given much more than accommodation to the 14 residents of the community. It has experimented with a model of care for people with mental illness which seeks to keep the Haven residents, residents' families, and the local South Yarra community connected and working together for the good of all. Haven South Yarra has succeeded beyond the initial expectations of its founders in providing a network of support for its members. Because of this success in caring for its residents and engaging the local South Yarra community, the Haven Foundation now has a plan in place to replicate the Haven model of care elsewhere in Victoria.

Last year, sadly, one of the principle persons responsible for the founding of the Haven community in South Yarra and fellow parishioner, Isabel Cid, passed away. She is greatly missed by both the Haven residents and their families, and we wish to commend her to God's loving care.

Janet Maher and Fr. Michael Sullivan osa continue to represent our parish at Haven Hub Committee meetings so that the connection with our parish continues to be strong. A couple of the residents from the Haven community help with the Thursday night bread packing and one is a reader at the weekday masses in St. Thomas Aquinas Church.

Fr. Michael Sullivan osa

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

Pope Francis published the long awaited “Laudato Si’ On Care for Our Common Home – An Encyclical Letter on Ecology and Climate”. We hosted a Professional Development evening for teachers and others on a bitterly cold and miserable night in July warmed only by the excellent presentations of Mr. Mark Clarke Archdiocesan Office for Justice and Peace and Sr. Mary Coloe, followed by some warm finger food. During the remainder of the 2015 year some members of the Social justice group presented a chapter on the Encyclical letter followed by discussion where we learned from each other the wisdom in the Encyclical. All those attending now have a much better understanding of the issues and the Catholic Church’s views on the ecology and climate.

We ran our regular Parish Conversations during the year.

Susan Howe 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.

AMES Volunteer Lorraine Henderson spoke on the settlement services provided to new and recently arrived refugees and migrants. AMES partners with community organizations and volunteers to build awareness and strong community, businesses, and education and training support.

Sr. Michelle Reid spoke about the work of the Good Samaritan sisters providing a short term safe home for women and children in Melbourne.

In February 2016 we discussed what might appeal to the Parish in the Social Justice arena. It was suggested the Parish Council might consider hosting a Parish Expo after the Masses where all parish organizations can put on display what the Parish does outside Mass.

John Flint

## **THE BARRY LIBRARY**

The Library received a further twenty items (books, pamphlets, cd's and dvd's) into the collection this year. We are pleased to have welcomed new 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.

Donations of books on Catechetics, Church History, Parish History, Social Justice and children's religious books are always welcome as additions to the library.

## **PARISH ARCHIVES**

The parish archives are continuing to be maintained to be used as a resource.

The library can assist parishioners, former parishioners and others to research their family history if they had a family member who was married, baptized or confirmed in St Joseph's parish.

Linda Williams and Genine McCarthy

Librarian/Archivists

## **THE KNITTERS OF THE ROUND TABLE**

"The Knitters of the Round Table" have been coming together for 15 years. It is the group of 16 ladies that meet once a week in the Prahran Community Centre to share their love of creative knitting in a social and welcoming environment . They have been knitting blankets, children's jumpers and beanies.

This group though small in membership is open to new members and knits hundreds of garments a year and is a great way for residents to meet each other.

As knitting is a creative craft and skill that can save dollars, the knitting group are actively promoting their knowledge of knitting to the wider community.

Collectively coming together weekly the knitters are helping families facing hardship by providing knitted blankets, jumpers and beanies. When completed garments/blankets are given to St Joseph's Outreach Services run by the parish of South Yarra to distribute to the needy and disadvantaged in our community .

We thank the Stonnington Council in kind community Grant for granting \$500 each year to buy needles and wool .

"The Knitters of The Round Table" is a welcoming, talented and productive group that provides help for those most needy in our parish and wider community . It is open to anybody who would be willing to join them, learn the craft and help those in need.

Ona Stewart

Pastoral Associate

## **OTHER SOCIAL ACTIVITIES IN OUR PARISH**

We were all delighted to celebrate **Fr Abel's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday** with him in February this year. Many parish priests retire at around 75; we are most indebted to Abel for agreeing to continue in the role this year and we thank him for his faithful service of the 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 you are strongly encouraged to do so. It's a great way to meet new parishioners..

The **Parish Barbecue** in December was another most enjoyable 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 many of our parish activities and we enjoy reading them as they are published.

Di Brebner

## **PRIORY DINNERS**

Our first Priory dinner was held in August 2013 as a way of allowing the Augustinians, our priests, to meet with parishioners (and parishioners with each other) in a more relaxed setting than is possible with a quick hello before or after weekend Masses. It also allowed Parishioners to inspect and look round the then newly renovated Priory and enjoy its atmosphere.

With the Augustinians acting as hosts, providing the venue as well as drinks and nibbles, guests were invited to come to Dinner one month simply as guests, and then asked to return (on a paying-it-back basis) the following month, this time as providers of the main meal and sweets, and to serve and clean up as necessary.

While we've tried to host these gatherings once a month on the last Friday, this hasn't always been feasible, for lack of an adequate number of people accepting the invitation to sustain the continuance of these dinners, as well as Christmas holidays or other events precluding us from hosting them.

Yet, out of the 21 occasions when invitations were sent out, only 4 had to be cancelled. The remaining 17 proved most enjoyable, for the company as well as the rich variety of food served. Well done to all who made it so.

Fr. Abel.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

The members of the Finance Committee for the last financial year were Fr Abel Van Der Veer, Fr Michael Sullivan, Carole McNally (Business Manager), Paul Mulqueen, John Flint, Rick Talbot & Toniette D'Andrea.

### **OPERATING INCOME & EXPENDITURE**

Our Annual Financial Statement showed a very small deficit of \$4,000. Considering that our operating expenditure and income exceeded \$330,000, we should be rightly proud of achieving such a small deficit. The Parish spent over \$57,000 on repairs and maintenance to its buildings during the last year. This amount included extensive repairs to the roof of St. Thomas Aquinas. Big ticket items include insurance which exceeded \$30,000, cleaning & gardening at \$27,000 and Archdiocesan Levies of \$22,000. Our council rates were increased due to the inclusion of the Fire Services Tax which saw an increase of almost \$5,500 for the 2014/15 year. Our rental income increased by \$11,000 largely due to the efforts of Chris Ryan, our School Liaison officer and the windfall hosting of a training college for a 6 month period. Thanksgiving was also up by almost \$11,000. Our investment income was stable despite the downturn in interest rates. This was due to some quick timing in renewing and shifting our small investment sum.

### **THE COMING YEAR**

In 2016 we will look to consolidating our efforts of the last two years in an effort to maintain an even keel. This year's projects include the repointing and repairing of the brick wall at the rear of the Fitzgerald Street properties, repairs to the fencing at St. Thomas Aquinas and a number of more general maintenance tasks to all of our buildings. Although our parishioners are amongst the most generous of people, the cost to the Parish of maintenance to our buildings makes it nigh on impossible to carry out all the projects on the Parish 'wish list.' Each year, the finance committee chooses one or two major projects and all other requests are considered in terms of cost and value for money versus affordability. Already this year we have incurred more than \$6,000 of roofing repairs to the Priory following a storm and currently are making some quite major repairs to the in-ground lighting around St. Joseph's Church. A storm which resulted in the spire of St. Joseph's being hit by lightning in November 2015 resulted in damage to the telephone system in the Parish Centre and several pieces of computer equipment. Fortunately, our insurance policy has covered full replacement of the telephone system and has even allowed for an upgrade to the Priory telephone system, found necessary as there is a link between the two buildings.

### **THANKS**

Our thanks to the members of the Parish Finance Committee, to our parishioners for their continued generous support and to St. Joseph's Outreach Services for their ongoing support in off-setting some of our community outreach costs.

Carole McNally



**ST JOSEPH'S PARISH CENTRE**

**30 Fitzgerald St, South Yarra**

**P.O. Box 21 South Yarra VIC 3141**

**Tel 03 9826 9677**

**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**

**Bro. Percival Severe OSA**