

# ST. JOSEPH'S PARISH CHRONICLE

Newsletter of St. Joseph's Parish, South Yarra.

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*From our Pastor's Pen*

## What do we want our parish to be?



The retiring chairperson of the ABC, James Spigelman, was recently quoted in the media as saying, "The ABC has to treat its audience as citizens, not consumers. As people with rights and duties, not just wants and needs."

He was speaking about the need for the ABC to remain true to its guiding philosophy.

I think that what he had to say regarding the nature and work of the ABC is also true for the church, and for our parish of South Yarra. In the church and in our parish we are not merely consumers. All of us are citizens who have rights and duties, not just wants and needs.

St Paul wrote in the letter to the Philippians that we are citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20). But at times, as Catholics, we have been brought up to think of ourselves more as consumers of religion than as citizens of God's Kingdom. While in some particular aspects of church life bishops and priests did teach lay members of the church about their duties to support the church, church leadership has often been guilty of treating the laity as immature consumers of religious practices.

Parishioners at our two churches in South Yarra are citizens of God's Kingdom and have an interest in what happens in our parish and in the wider Church. Through baptism, each of us has been called by Christ to be a disciple of the Good News, someone engaged in building the Kingdom of God.

Unfortunately, for many centuries some in the Church tended to take this to mean that they were building some kind of perfect society. Pope Francis has corrected this misunderstanding, teaching us that rather than being a perfect society, the Church can better be described as "God's field hospital".

We are in fact wounded citizens of the Kingdom of God, but not citizens who are sitting warily behind the walls of a castle watching the world going by outside. We are wounded pilgrim citizens, active in our world, full of hope and trust in God.

Our parish motto is: "One in mind and heart on the way to God". St. Augustine took the idea of being "one in mind and heart" from the Acts of the Apostles and added the words, "on the way to God" in order to emphasize the pilgrim, communitarian nature of the Christian life.

The Christian life is not a solitary journey but a journey with others, wounded others. People of our parish come from all over the world. We all have different gifts and talents. We

are also wounded and imperfect. We wish to journey with one another in the Christian life. I believe this is at the heart of what it means for us to be the community of the Parish of South Yarra.

Fr. Michael Osa

## THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS.

Visits to the Holy Land, and to Jerusalem in particular, to pray at the places where Jesus was born, lived, suffered, died, and rose again are almost as old as the Church itself.

St. Paul, when he came to Jerusalem in 49 A.D., more than likely visited various of the places connected with

Jesus. St. Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, is said to have overseen personally the excavation of Calvary where the Holy Cross was found in 324 A.D.. From the late 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards letters survive of Christians who have made this journey as a form of pilgrimage.

However, the Way of the Cross as we know it, was not established until the mid-1200s, after St. Francis of Assisi went to Jerusalem, and obtained permission from the Sultan of Egypt for his friars, the Franciscans, to take on the guardianship of the Christian sites, subsequently endorsed by Pope Clement VI, and were able to pinpoint several places where, according to tradition, the Way of the Cross took place.

Later, to allow the faithful, who could not personally travel to the Holy Land to follow the Way of the Cross, the Franciscans received permission from Pope Innocent XI to place depictions of the Stations in their churches and chapels, a custom which was soon followed by Parish churches, Monasteries and Convents.

Ever since the Stations have been a popular devotion in which Christians of every faith have participated, particularly on Good Friday, although it is also used as a private devotion, where people in their own time come to unite themselves to the sufferings of Christ in this way.

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## Our RCIA Candidates for Baptism.

### Profile, Rose Marie Ripley.



Hello there... My name is Rose Marie Ripley and I am very happy to be part of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults 2017. I have not been living in Melbourne long, but I am happy to take the Oath of Faith, to follow the path of Christ.

Recently, at the Welcome for Candidates, I received the Sign of the Cross on my forehead, eyes, ears, lips and shoulders, -

this act moved me deeply emotionally. I cannot explain why. All I can write is how I felt. I felt the holiness in what was being done to me. It reminded me of my marriage. A union took place, a promise. My heart was in it! And my eyes showed it with tears. I felt free, light and very positive.

I'd like to thank our sponsors and priests, Frs. Abel and Michael and Deacon Percival for all the support in what we are doing! Thank you.

### Profile: Gareth Mayo.



To answer the question of where one is from? Where they are going? I have been fortunate to have had the life of an expat child when the family adventure began in the UK, before going on to Kenya as a boy of just under 10 years old. After Kenya, I had the opportunity of undertaking Boarding-school in South Africa while finally heading back to London at the age of 18. Attending Methodist School in South Africa enabled me to have my first experience with the power of faith within the community and witnessing those with the passion and the belief in God. Myself, raised in a non-religious home, while the experience was drawing at the time, I felt I was not ready to undertake that path.

For the past six years I have been truly blessed in having the love of my life, who is now my fiancé, in my world and through her and her wonderful family had the opportunity again of witnessing the joy and close bond that many people have with each other and with God within their own Catholic communities. The closeness and the tight bond that binds people within their respective communities has shown me how powerful God's message is, and I finally felt inspired and a longing for fulfilment in wanting to begin my own journey with the Church.

The messages and studies by attending the RCIA here in Melbourne and becoming part of the St. Joseph's Parish community have further enabled me to have and feel that confidence, and I am very excited in being able to start this journey, my own journey with my fellow RCIA Elects!

### Profile, Yuki Okuno



My name is Yuki Okuno and I am from Japan. I am an audiologist and have been living in Melbourne for the last 7 years. Soon I expect to be baptised. I am very happy to have come this far. On the Easter Vigil, all my family will be in Japan, but Jesus is there.

Since I started this journey I have become aware of many things. In Japan, I used to please people, to do my best for family honour and try to be nice for being accepted by society. I did not understand spirituality. Now I am blessed through the Catholic faith, I can nurture my spirit through the gifts of the sacraments, prayer and unity of the Trinity.

In Australia I did not know what to follow, I wanted to be accepted by the main stream Australian. I wanted to be independent and successful in my career. If I had a strong spiritual Christian background, knowing true faith, I might not have to be always worried if I was relevant in something that won't last. That was a constant struggle, but not any more. God made me free of that.

God is far greater than anything. God made me strong with love and raised me as his child. I learnt to act for love, not for praises. Knowing God, - his will for us, love for us, and works for us made me free. Free from anything that might keep me away from God. He made me strong and free from fear. Listening to Christ's teaching makes me feel ready for anything. I am very happy that finally I am a Christian.

Therefore, I am your sister in God. I am not alone. I have many family in Australia now. Thank you.



## Holy Week

### HOLY WEEK & EASTER TIMETABLE.

**PALM SUNDAY:** Sat. 8 April, 6.00 pm at St. Joseph's,

Sun. 9 April, 9.00 a.m at St. Thomas Aquinas church  
10.30 a.m. at St. Joseph's church.

**Holy Thursday, 13th April.**

7.00 p.m. Mass of the Last Supper.

**Good Friday, 14th April.**

10.00 a.m. Stations of the Cross: St. Thomas Aquinas.  
3.00 p.m., Celebration of the Lord's Passion: St. Joseph.

**Holy Saturday, 15th April.**

5.00-6.00 p.m., **Reconciliation.**

7.00 p.m. The Easter Vigil at St. Joseph's.

**Easter Sunday, 16th April.**

9.00 a.m. Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas.  
10.30 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph's

## Profile, Kevin Jang.

Legend has it that an eager university student once summoned the nerve to ask Robert Frost, "What is the meaning of life?" The aging poet patiently took a nickel out of his pocket, laid a blank piece of paper over it, and started making random markings with the edge of a pencil. After a minute or so the image of an American bison began to emerge, and the student was sent on his way without ever hearing Frost speak a word to him. The unstated message, I guess, was that we carry an certain amount of identity with us, but that only after going through a considerable amount of experience do we begin to have a sense of who we really are.



I was brought up with Christian views and my mother often had a minister over to conduct Bible studies with my sister and me. While Mom decided not to pursue that further, that seed was sown. Over the years, it was often choral and classical music that kept me from straying too far from religion. Moving halfway across the world to live in a new country ('Eh") had me searching for a new me: a new me that's not about me, but about us all. And in the Cathedral cities of Europe, Church art and architecture invited me in, but once inside I realized I had actually just returned home. The coin-image is still resolving and probably always will, but I can now say, "Here I am, Lord."

## Profile, James Khademi

My birth-name is Ali but I prefer to be called James. I am 25 years old and I am from Iran.

Born into a Muslim family, I was taught about Islam at school and forced to read Quran, which is Islam's holy book, every night. The more I read and learned, the more I came to the realization that its teachings contradicted with what I felt about God.



After years of hardships, my parents were divorced when I was 15 and following altercations between us and the government, my mother, two sisters and I finally fled Iran successfully in 2013. Three weeks after our departure, we went through a terrifying 34-hour boat ride which brought us to Australia's waters where we were rescued/captured by the Royal Australian Navy.

We were transported to Christmas Island's Immigration detention center. After a total of one month in 3 different detention centers, I was granted a Bridging visa. A decision was made for me to be released into the city of Adelaide, whereas my mother and two sisters – the younger aged 10 at the time – continued being detained for an additional seven more months. I moved to Melbourne upon my family's release from detention in mid-2014. Afraid and confused, I spent most of my time in Mel-

bourne just basically idling. As a family, what we had gone through, alongside the harsh reality that seeking asylum is considered a crime and not a right, had begun to show impact on all of us; as if our dreams had died, future terrified all of us. Frankly speaking, we still have not been able to recover as the future for us remains uncertain.

After nearly two years of asking my caseworker at AMES for any employment/educational opportunities, I met with a new caseworker and she immediately introduced me to a Catholic school called St Joseph, North Melbourne. As I began attending the school, I noticed how nice the staff were to all the students. It seemed to me like they were angels sent from heaven! After some weeks of contemplating, I finally found enough courage to ask my teacher for help. Much to my surprise, I learned that she was not a member of the Catholic Church, so she introduced me to a voluntary case-worker in my class whom was a Catholic.

The gentleman's name was Jim whom happened to be involved in the RCIA program in his own parish. I was only looking for some basic information, like an address, but instead God sent me a ship and a captain to lead me directly to his church, so I don't get lost again. I cannot find words to thank Jim enough. Not only is he my sponsor for baptism, but also a friend, a role-model and a father figure. I also thank everyone in the South Yarra parish who have been extremely nice and welcoming, I am far beyond words grateful for your kindness. I am finally home!



## Children's Sacramental Preparation.

Preparation for 1st Communion AND Confirmation will commence on Wednesday, 3rd May 2017 at 4.00 p.m. For 4-6 weeks.

We will have 2 different groups. One for each Sacrament.

If you wish your child to receive those Sacraments, please contact Fr. Michael or Br. Percival at the Parish Office.

## Christian Meditation: A Journey to the Heart.

The practice of meditation is deeply rooted in our Christian tradition. Throughout the ages, Christian spiritual sages have spoken about experiencing the mysterious presence of God in and through stillness and silence, which are the essential elements of meditation. The

Book of Psalms tells us, "Be still, and know that I am God."

Truly, it is in stillness that we become more and more receptive to the Spirit and attentive to the presence of God within us. John Main OSB, who was a strong advocate of the practice of Christian meditation, believes that "the all-important aim in Christian meditation is to allow God's mysterious and silent presence within us to become more and more not only a reality, but the reality which gives meaning, shape and purpose to everything we do, to everything we are..."



According to St. John of the Cross, "it is best to learn to silence the faculties (*intellect and will*) and to cause them to be still, so that God may speak." Often we find it difficult to recognize God's presence in our life and hear Him speak in the depths of our heart because we are caught up with the never-ending demands of our busy lifestyle. Mother Teresa of Calcutta strongly believes that in our search for God and hunger for His divine presence we need to be still and silent, for God cannot be found in noise and restlessness. For her, "God is the friend of silence."

To be truly still and silent requires discipline. In fact, John Main, OSB argues, "the really important thing about meditating is the discipline of it." For this reason, a group of us gathers every Friday at 10.30 in the morning at St. Joseph's Church, not only to practice meditation but also to find support and encouragement in each other to persevere in the discipline of Christian meditation. During this time, we listen to a 10-15 minute taped talk on the principles and practice of meditation, by Laurence Freeman OSB. After which, we meditate together using John Main's Time Peace Meditation CD's.

Over the past few months, friendships were born out of our meditation sessions. Surely, the soothing peace and calm that meditation brings fosters a genuine openness to God and to each other. It has also been part of our Friday gathering to meet at the parish library after the meditation session for a cuppa.

If you are interested in finding solitude away from the busyness of life, then please come along and join us in our meditation sessions. Together we journey to the heart and enjoy the peace that the presence of God within brings.

**Percival Severe O.S.A.**

## THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS, continued.

*(What follows now is an edited version of a reflection written by Fr. Flor McCarthy as Foreword to his book: The Stations of the Cross, containing a selection of texts for the Way of the Cross provided by several authors, and published by Dominican Publications, Dublin.)*

Not that anyone has to go looking for suffering. Sooner or later it knocks on everybody's door. A difficulty arises when too much emphasis is placed on suffering as the will of God. This has given rise to unquestioning resignation in the face of things and conditions which could and should be changed.

God does not want us to suffer, any more than parents want their children to suffer. Nor did he want his Son to suffer. The Passion was not something Jesus had to go through because his Father demanded this of him. It was something he freely chose. "No one takes my life from me; I lay it down of my own free will." (John,10:18) Christ suffered because he was faithful to the task his Father had given him, - to be a shepherd to his flock. He was that Good Shepherd who, through love, lays down his life for his sheep. We are saved by the love with which he bore his sufferings.

It follows that what Christ wants from us, his followers, is not our suffering but our love and faithful witness. Our Christian vocation challenges us to be people who love, who care, and therefore who suffer as Christ suffered. However, sometimes the only witness we may be able to give is to suffer patiently.

Christ is no spectator, no critic, standing on the sidelines of life. He shared our human condition fully. He took on himself the burden of all human suffering. He is the guarantee that pain, suffering, loss and death do not separate us from God, but bring us closer to him. They are not the end, the last word.

He suffered for us and still suffers in us. But this does not mean that he takes our pain away. No one, not even Christ, can suffer in our place. What Christ does is make it possible for us to transform our suffering into a thing of value. He helps us bear it in a way that purifies and spiritualizes us.

Hence, all sufferers can draw comfort, strength, and hope from the Passion of Christ. The following of Christ's path to Calvary will help us to bear our cross, whatever form it takes, with patience and dignity. May it open our eyes to those who suffer around us and move us to do what we can to help them.

### **THE BEGINNING, THE MIDDLE, AND THE END.**

**The following have been added to the Christian community via the waters of Baptism:** Charles Pelicano, Max Tay, Edward Hoon, Patrick Rosario, Wyatt Wilson, William Baddeley, Roisin Ni Bhriain, Scarlett Vaccaro, Raphael Chew, Isaac Chew, Charlie Jones.

**The knot was tied between:** Nicholas Quinn & Sarah Love, Mathew Adams & Andrea Nicol, Matthew Johnson & Liza Hudson, David Batten & Bronwyn Angus, Joshua Ryan & Nerida Balbata, William Ransom & Nicole Sage.

**While** Wendy Seymour-Smith, Kerry Quin, Odile Moktar & Diana Goller **returned to their Creator.**