

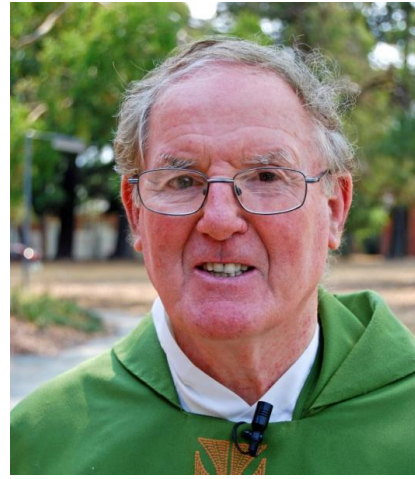
A word from Fr. Pat.....

At the beginning of my tenth year as parish priest and on the eve of our 50th anniversary, I recall the words of Thomas Merton, "It is essential to experience the times and moods of one good place". That place for me is St. Christopher's Parish, Syndal. The mood overall, for me was one of welcome, being accepted with no great fuss, and of inheriting a wonderful and loving community. If I were to mention the names, work and contribution of each parishioner, I would never finish. I hold you all in honour in my heart and at each Mass.

We build on each other's achievements: the foundations laid by Fr. John Hennessy, Fr. John Flynn, Br. Kevin and other Pallottines, priestly, religious and lay. The physical changes to this good place have been in response to the needs and ideas of others: data projection, lighting, heating, dusting, fans, sound system, a pulley system for banners or Advent wreaths, signage, disabled parking, servery and piety stall, four new classrooms, repair and extension of the hall, lighting the tennis courts, fencing, land purchase near the hall, church glazing and the updating of the parish office. All this is simply the stage for creative parish life, assisted by Sr. Joy, the Parish Pastoral Council, the Finance and Admin Committee, the Education Board and many vital volunteer groups.

Demographically, with death and ageing, we are undergoing changes, being enriched, by a wider cultural mix from the Asia-Oceanic region which brings young life to complement the work of the founding members of our parish. Our thrust from the beginning was two-fold: Community and Liturgy which quickly included Ministry/Service (Diakonia) and Faith Education (Kerygma) for adults and children.

Under **Communion** we note the work of the parish secretaries, the informative weekly bulletin; our monthly Anointing Masses and luncheons; Chinese/Indonesian and Sri-Lankan New Year festivals, Mothers groups and Before and After School programmes.



From the start, the outreach to youth and young adults has been through Antioch, Yady, PYE, Ripples, camps, outings in the context of family, and the sponsorship of 3 World Youth Days. Our children are well catered for through netball, tennis, footy, dance and drama activities, thanks to the work of parents and teachers. Adults and youth utilise the Parish Tennis Club. A recent development for seniors is the 55+ Social group & the Sip 'n Chat after 9.15 Thursday Mass. All these things do not just happen but need planning and parishioner response.

There is a great music tradition in our parish **Liturgy**, - 8 groups represent the different age groups, choir, family, young adult, youth and children. Children's Liturgy of the Word, altar servers, sacristans, liturgical ministries cover a wide range, noted on our rosters.



Forty Ministers of the Sick generously serve two aged care facilities, the hospital and homebound parishioners.

Our Easter and Christmas liturgies, the Advent workshops and Christmas Carols Night, the parent reflections on Mother's and Father's Days, Graduations, Sacramental programmes for parents and children, RCIA preparation, Godstart for parents with younger children, reflect some of the creative events through the year. It's here that visitors experience the vibrant life of the Parish and the contribution that our parents, teachers and St. Christopher's School and Sunday School children make.

Communion must lead to mission, the church (that's us) in service to the world (**Diakonia**). John Paul II at the start of the New Millennium called us to 'open our hearts to Christ'. In preparation for our parish mission, and now for our Jubilee, we began Home Masses in the parish zones, seeking to renew the spirit of the parish, and to grow in Pallotti's vision of people called and gifted, acting from a sense of mission in ordinary daily life. Our Pallottine Youth Encounter in WYD'O8 was an intense experience of Pallottine Collaboration as we hosted 173 Pallottine young adults from all over the world. Diakonia is carried out by St Vincent De Paul Conference, Bread Run, Meals on Wheels, Syndal Helpers and the Grief and Bereavement Ministries, Knights of the Southern Cross, Ripples Café, Nawadih Mission and Fr Syrinus' South Africa mission. There is the constant, often hidden, care and maintenance of the school/parish grounds, buildings and equipment.

Adult faith education (**Kerygma**) equips our people for mission and service. Over the years multi-media courses, individual lectures in scripture and spirituality, our parish missions have been well attended. Queen of Apostles Charismatic Prayer Group, Pallottine Spirituality and other groups have enriched our lives. Congratulations to you all, but fasten your seat belts we still have a long way to go.

Fr. Pat Jackson SAC