

February 2007

## **St Christopher's Parish Syndal – Community Report – 2006**

How blessed and fortunate we are to be a part of the active sharing community that is the St Christopher's family in Syndal that so well supports us as we each experience our life journey. Our spiritual, pastoral and communal needs are extremely well served by the parish members acting as a caring, compassionate and welcoming community.

Our spiritual needs are professionally, caringly and generously served by our Parish Team led by Father Pat, Father John and Sr Joy, although it seems that there is some relief at the less demanding pace experienced when Fr Pat is away on a well deserved vacation. Increased attendance at Mass and the generous and increased contributions to the weekly and charitable collections is a measure of the appreciation of the parishioners of these wonderful people and of our own spiritual wellbeing.

Parish members support Fr Pat and Sr Joy in sharing the faith journey of those who seek to know or join our Catholic community through the Rite of Christian Initiative of Adults (RCIA) program that culminates with the reception of the candidates into the Church at our Easter vigil ceremonies. The Sunday school program conducted by Sr Joy and her band of willing supporters provides an opportunity for our younger children to learn of our faith.

Our spiritual needs are enhanced by the many prayer and spirituality groups – including the Charismatic Group and the Pallotti Spirituality Groups – who meet in community throughout the year at the parish and at home. The "Faith in Our Time" program conducted in the parish by Father Edmund Nixon in May 2006 was a well attended and much appreciated opportunity to refresh our understanding of our faith and a wider understanding of the humanity in which we experience it. The Pilgrim Statue as I moves around the parish evidences our love of Mary and reinforces our commitment to her Son and the Father.

Barry McLellan and his teaching staff further enhance our community through their dedicated provision of the educational needs of our children – their scholastic, sporting, communal and – with the support of Fr Pat and Sr Joy – their spiritual education. Before and after school care serves those who through personal circumstances need support with the care of children outside school times.

The Singing Mums, Trinity and the various other music groups provide not only great music to complement our church services but too represent another instance of the parish members acting communally.

The youth of the parish have also been well catered for through not only the music groups to which they may belong, but also through YADYM, the Antioch group, other youth groups and the various sports teams competing under the St Christopher's name. The Pallottine Youth Encounter group affords a wonderful opportunity to prepare for Pallottine Youth Encounter 2008 and World Youth Day 2008 (WYD08) to follow in Sydney.

The compassionate and caring nature of our community is evidenced by the endeavours of those who provide support of the bereaved in their time of need – whether it is by the provision of meals, prayer, or emotional support. This too is evidenced by the work of the St Vincent De Paul Society, the St Christopher's Syndal Community Helpers, the Telephone Prayer Chain, the Senior's Lunch providers and the many others acting individually or in groups who support those of our neighbours who are disadvantaged or need our support from time to time.

The social needs of our parish are well served by the many groups who gather together to enjoy the occasion and each other's company – including the Italian community and the Men's breakfast groups who gather to share experiences, prayer and a meal. The annual Parish picnic, the Pallotti Festival and dance and concert events in the Hall offer us further opportunity to not only enjoy ourselves but also to know our neighbours better.

Those who assist with the Mass – in the preparation of the Prayers of the Faithful, the Altar Servers, the Lay Ministers, Readers and Commentators, Sacristans, those setting up for Mass and those preparing the flowers – and those Ministers of the Sick and the Counters are all committed persons who willingly, faithfully and lovingly in community serve the Lord.

It is a pleasure to be a member of this wonderful St Christopher's – Syndal community.

John Staunton

Community Representative