

PARISH PRIEST'S REPORT 2009-2010

ONLY GOD GIVES GROWTH

1 Corinthians 3:6-9

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labour of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

As I was beginning to think about my report this year to our Annual General Meeting, I received Liz Clark's resignation letter. Liz has been on the staff for many years now. She has been a great support to me especially when I was new to the whole Australian scene and parish work, first as a Parish Secretary and later as a Pastoral Associate. I'll miss her; her leaving reminds me of how our parishes continue to change and grow with the leaving and moving in of new parishioners and staff. We thank Liz for her generous contribution to our parish life and wish her well in retirement. I am sure God has another project for her.

The building, refurbishment and maintenance works are going on and we are in the advance stage of completion. Work for our St Francis Xavier church will begin soon. We have received approval from the bishop and are waiting for the architect to finalise details for the new gathering place. The delay has been caused by the refurbishment work in the school. At St Clare's, maintenance work and painting are taking place at the parish centre and it should be completed by the end of this month. Then we have to start the conversation for planning and refurbishment of the church. By the end of this year or early next year we should have refurbished most of our buildings. Thank you to all our staff and committees for their guidance and support.

The ongoing building work together with Fr Ben's and Fr Bob's illness last year sapped much of my energy, yet we managed to care for our parishioners. Thank you to all who work and care for our parishes and to all parishioners for your generous contribution, financially, of time, energy, leadership and ideas. Thank you for your patience and cooperation in putting up with all the inconvenience of the building work.

The challenge for us in 2010 -2011 is to organise and use our resources well; we need to start rethinking, planning and implementing strategies that will help build our faith communities. Liturgy, pastoral care, faith development and community building need a boost and some new ideas.

We face the future together as two parish communities, trusting in Providence.

Fr Anthoni Selvaraj ofm
Parish Priest

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE'S REPORT 2009-2010

For years I've collected and written down quotes that speak to me in one way or another. One I particularly like (author unknown) says: *Jesus came to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable.* I think this has been my role this year, and may well be a job description for any pastoral associate.

My pastoral responsibilities involve bringing comfort to those in need, whether by listening, sharing stories, bringing Communion, smiling, touching, crying with, providing physical and emotional support, or just being a friendly voice at the end of the phone.

The more practical side of my role tends to be the one that afflicts the comfortable—inviting people to take responsibility in this community, asking hard questions, urging commitment on the reluctant, finding the right people for the right tasks. Sometimes the things I write in My Corner afflict you; sometimes I may stun someone by telling them of the gifts I discern in them, or suggesting they step outside their comfort zone and attempt something new. Mostly I try to remind parishioners to stay awake and to actively participate in bringing God's kingdom to life in Box Hill.

This year, in a bid to ensure that parishioners wear out rather than rust out (another quote), I have established Communion ministries at St Vincent de Paul Hostel in Strabane Avenue, and at Epworth Eastern, daring to extend an impetus to be involved to our neighbours at St Thomas'. They now visit Epworth with us, and participated in the Grief and Loss course we held in the parish last year.

Other than these new initiatives, my ministry has continued on, with special emphasis on the Baptism program, RCIA, catechetics, visitation, liturgy, support of various groups. These activities have both challenged me and delighted me during the year. As most of you will now know, this is my last report to you, as I head into retirement and new fields. I trust that the 7 years

I have been pastoral associate in the parish have both comforted and afflicted you in appropriate ways.

I joyfully acknowledge the tremendous gift this time has been for me. My heart is heavy at the thought of leaving you all behind, but I know that

your strong faith and your commitment to God and each other mean that this community will go from strength to strength in the years to come.

May God bless and keep you

May God's face shine on you.

May God be kind to you and give you peace.

Liz Clark
Pastoral Associate

ST FRANCIS XAVIER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

The SFX School Annual Report will be available at the Annual General Meeting and via the parish website.

Carmel Purdey
Principal

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL REPORT FOR THE 2010 AGM

New members on the PPC;

Over the past 12 months the Parish Pastoral Council has welcomed a number of new members:

- Pat Cleary;
- Breta Cohen;
- Jane D'Souza; and
- Ann-Marie Diggins.

Welcome these new members to the St Francis Xavier and St Clare's Pastoral Parish Council, we are most fortunate to have these new members to contribute their ideas and opinions to help improve the running of the PPC.

We would also like to acknowledge the wonderful work of those members who retired last year:

- Trish Nicholson;
- Vince Fazio; and
- Liz Allan.

The development of a Strategic Plan for the PPC;

During the past 12 months a member of the Parish Pastoral Council has been actively refining the Strategic Plan for the PPC. In mid November 2009 the St Francis Xavier and St Clare's Pastoral Parish Council was very fortunate to have Dr Peter Price lead a seminar to help the Parish Pastoral Council name its key priorities over the next five years. As a result the following roles of the Pastoral Parish Council were examined and considered.

Assessment of Priority Areas

Priority Area	Ranking
Formation of Christian Community	1
Liturgy and Celebration	2
Service and Outreach	3

The Strategic Plan draft will be made available shortly and members of both parishes will have the opportunity to comment and feedback. Once refinements have been made the Strategic Plan will be operational on 1 July 2010 - to align with the new financial year.

School Building Development;

We hope to have the Blessing and Opening of the New School Buildings in October this year. More details regarding the school building will be provided over the next few months.

Berengarra development at St Clare's

In September 2009, representatives from the St Clare's Finance Committee and the Parish Pastoral Council meet with the Principal and Business Manager of Berengarra School. The result of the discussions recommended to Fr Anthony ofm that the Berengarra School be offered a five year lease with an option to extend for additional three years.

How the PPC is seeking to improving communication via the Box Hill Buzz;

Hopefully, all of you will have read at least one copy of the Box Hill Buzz. Given the last parish survey highlighted the need to improve communication the PPC has decided to publish 3 - 4 copies of the Box Hill Buzz. By highlighting new or ongoing activities, we hope this help inform our community and generates a greater sense of belonging.

Those who have a suggestion or an article or wish provide assistance are encouraged to contact Veronika Bellis on

Veronika.Urh@medicalboardvic.org.au

At St Clare's there have been works carried out such as general maintenance and other works to enhance the facilities for the use of the Parish.

At St Francis Xavier we look forward to the completion of the Parish Hall with the new facilities which will enable the revival of the much missed morning cup of tea after 10.00am Mass.

We also would like to acknowledge on behalf of all Parishioners the work of our Priests. Thanks Fr

Antoni for your spiritual guidance and a special thank you to Fr Ben and Fr Bob who have experienced health problems in recent times, we hope you both keep well.

*Anthony Kennedy and Peter Leonard
Parish Pastoral Council*

FIRST FRIDAY COLLECTION

The First Friday Collection at the noon mass originated with the parish Sacred Heart Sodality, which collected among its members for a Sacred Heart Mission school in Sideia, PNG. Fifty years ago, a boarding school – which became known as “Hotel Sideia” – was opened, by Father John McGhee MSC, because the potential students lived mainly on outlying islands and daily attendance was impossible. Financing the boarding school was difficult and Father John, a long-time principal, enlisted support from friends, relatives and, no doubt, Sacred Heart Sodalities. In the sixties and seventies each Box Hill sodality member contributed twenty cents a month, which went into a red bag, and records from the time show that \$40.00 was sent each year to support a particular student.

It was the Sacred Heart Sodality which began the “Hour of Prayer for Priests” on First Fridays in the seventies and during the Hour the red bag went round the members for their contributions; very soon, other members of the congregation offered donations. In the late eighties the sodality lapsed but the Hour of Prayer for Priests was continued. Now, it is called a “Holy Hour”, we have exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, we continue to pray for our priests and the red bag collection has continued, with the help of Imelda Bianco, Ivan Mahlstedt and Judy Reid and many generous contributors. Our contributions to “Hotel Sideia” are very gratefully received, as the families in the area have difficulty earning the money to pay for their children’s education. There must now be many people in PNG who owe their position in life to the schooling they received at “Hotel Sideia”. The total collected for the financial year ending July 2009 was \$1716.39. The total for this year (to March) is \$1536.35. The money is put directly into the Mission bank account, so no expenses are incurred.

Imelda, Ivan, Judy

FOOD AT THE BARN (FAB)

Food at the Barn is a Box Hill ecumenical project that has been operating for ten years. Several local churches on a roster system provide a free two course lunch at the ‘Barn’ (Box Hill Baptist Church) every Wednesday for people in need. There are

usually between 40 – 50 people who use this service each week. FAB also has a dedicated team of 5 people who offer pastoral support.

The FAB group fund raises a couple of times a year to cover the overheads of app \$1800 pa. Each Church funds their own rostered meals which is between \$120- \$150 per week or \$3 per head app.

If you would like to help or make a donation, please contact the Parish Office.

FRANCIS/CLARE CHARISMATIC PRAYER COMMUNITY REPORT

Our Prayer Group at St Clare’s is now in its 11th year with attendance around twenty. As we come from different parishes the Monday meeting may often be the only time of contact, yet there is always a strong feeling of belonging to a loving, caring, community. We listen and pray for the needs of others, expecting and seeing healing.

We endeavour to keep our eyes on Jesus, to praise and worship His Divine Majesty in songs and prayer, and to use the Charismatic gifts mentioned in 1Cor:12. Throughout, the aim is to be open to the action of the Holy Spirit.

As to our plans and future projects for the year, our intention is to invite gifted speakers and teachers to come during the third term. On a personal level, when this report is being published I will be in Assisi for an International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference, which is a five day event culminating with a Mass on Pentecost Sunday. Of course, I will be praying for all our parishes. Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) began in the United States with a few people who had a deep experience of the Holy Spirit while on a weekend retreat in 1967. Renewal spread rapidly, coming to Australia in 1969. CCR acknowledges the Holy Spirit as founder.

We meet at St Clare’s Parish Hall, Killara St., each Monday (School term) 10.30am-12.00noon. We invite you to come and see.

Olive Hammill 9878 4103

AUTUMN FRIENDSHIP CLUB 2010

During the past year, the Autumn Friendship Club has continued to pursue its goal of providing companionship, support and occupation to the older members of the parish and the Whitehorse community.

Our “at home” activities included fund-raising afternoons and lunches, a musical afternoon, guest speakers from Yellow Cabs and Diabetes Prevention and a podiatrist, Bingo, board games, clothing and jewellery sales, Oaks Day lunch,

gentle exercises, a musical afternoon, a day of reflection with Liz and Christmas Dinner provided by parishioners.

Our excursions included a trip on the Ventura route bus, a visit to St. Francis in the city for mass and lunch, film lunches, a picnic, tenpin bowling and lunch at various venues, usually to mark the end of each term.

Through lunches and raffles, we raised money for the Cancer Council, for Katie Blundy, a parishioner working in a remote community in South Africa, for the Franciscan work in East Timor and for Diabetes Prevention.

We were very grateful to receive a grant of \$250.00 from Whitehorse Council, which enables us to subsidise the cost of some of our activities e.g. coaches and cinema lunches.

We are most grateful for all the support we have received from the parish – from Fathers Anthony, Ben and Bob, from Liz Clark, Monique Waring, Di Hardy, John Short - who sets up the hall for our meetings - Marlene Coulthard, who gently encourages us to exercise, Kaminthia O'Neill, who advised us on foot care, John and Therese Parker who entertained us with music and encouraged us to join in, Val Mooney, who spoke to us on her visit to Timor Leste; and all who helped provide the wonderful Christmas Dinner and entertainment.

We welcome all parishioners and members of the Whitehorse community and their friends to our functions and are always open to suggestions for further activities.

Judy Reid, Secretary

'GIRLS DRINKS'

Since 2005 'ladies' from the Parishes have gathered for an informal chat over a coffee or glass of wine. In 2010 we changed venues to the Box Hill RSL in Nelson Road.. We get together on the 2nd Friday of the Month from 5pm to 6.30pm. Come along & catch up with some new friends & old friends.

We would love to see you there.

ST FRANCIS XAVIER TENNIS CLUB

The Tennis Club is functioning well with stable membership around the 170 member mark, social and competition tennis being popular, and keen interest shown by the juniors in the tennis coaching provided by Leo Soulsby and Jose Fernandez.

Planning will be commencing shortly for the replacement of the two court surfaces which are now 12 years old. Regular services of the artificial grass surface have kept the courts in excellent condition, but the court surface is nearing the end of its life.

Investigation will be undertaken into new synthetic surfaces which are now available and the retaining wall and drainage problems will also be addressed.

The replacement of the surface will continue the provision of high quality tennis facilities to the parishioners of St. Clare and St. Francis Xavier.

SFX FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2009

The 2009 Financial Statements show that the Parish was a victim of the world financial crisis. Mass collections, the Parish's main source of income, decreased by more than 10% compared to the 2008 year. This is the largest yearly decrease the Parish has suffered for 4 years.

The positive from the General Financial Crisis was the receipt of Government funds to continue with the School building project. The next stage of the Parish development is renovating the Church and converting the old school library into a new Parish Centre.

As the end of the financial year is fast approaching I appeal to parishioners, who contribute to Thanksgiving, to ensure that their contributions match their pledged amount. I also appeal to Parishioners, who do not participate in Thanksgiving, to become involved. Funds can be contributed at Mass, by direct debit or eftpos. Please contact the Parish Office if you wish to join the Thanksgiving Campaign.

The Parish accounts for the three months to 31 March 2010 show that the 2009 trend is continuing, so Parish costs are being reviewed.

I wish to thank the Parish staff and all the Parishioners for their generosity with the giving of their time, talents and funds in support of the Parish.

*Greg Kitch
Finance Committee*