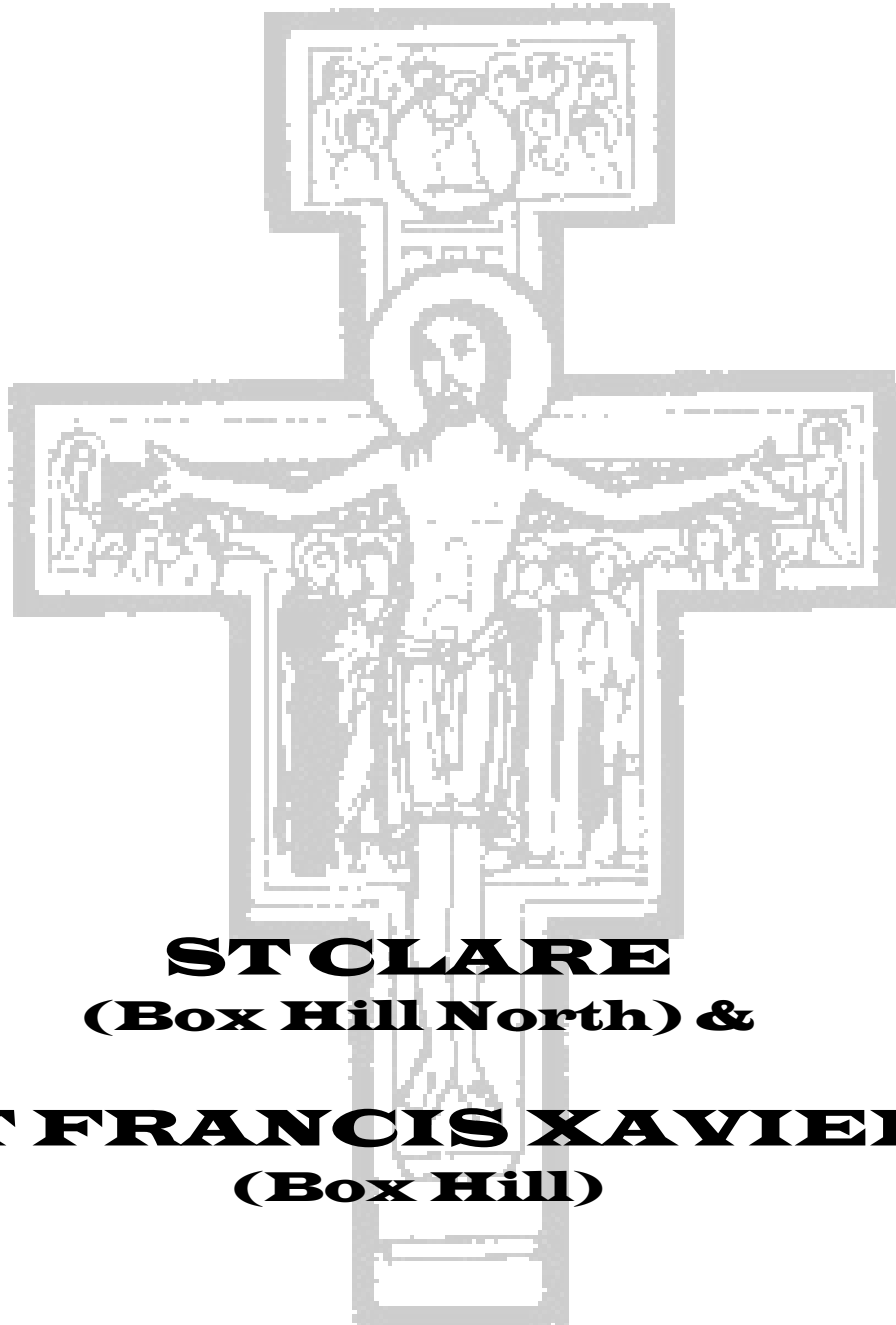


ANNUAL REPORT

2007-2008

for the Parishes of



ST CLARE

(Box Hill North) &

ST FRANCIS XAVIER

(Box Hill)

In the Care of the Franciscan Friars

PARISH PRIEST'S REPORT 2008

I write with thanksgiving in my heart for the many great blessings that we have experienced in the past year. Read these reports and see how our community lives out our faith and expresses it through service to the community and beyond. These reports give a greater insight into our community, and of all the activities that are going on in the parishes. Through the generosity of many, our parishes continue to be a vibrant worshipping community. My special thanks to Parish and School Staff for their commitment to the mission of the Church, to our Finance and Maintenance committees for your ongoing support and expertise, to the various people who are involved in Sacramental Preparation and RCIA, and to those who continue to spread the Good News and help others to grow in faith. Thank you to all parishioners for your ongoing support and encouragement to me as pastor and for your contribution to our parishes.

Celebrating Community

Last year Fr Bob's fiftieth ordination anniversary celebration was a great tribute to him, but also a wonderful reflection of our community. I treasure the day, the participation during Mass, followed by a great celebration in the parish hall with Fr Bob's family and friends. For me it was a healthy community at its best, celebrating and showing hospitality, all together, the young and the not so young. There were a few people who contributed to the evening but were unable to join in for various reasons. Special thanks to the Social Committee for organising in such a way that enabled many to be involved. There is always something to celebrate and I believe through all these great celebrations we are getting to know people and forming better relationships in the community.

Our liturgies continue to nourish our lives: thank you to our musicians, lectors, communion ministers, collectors, altar servers, sacristans and all who look after the linen, flowers and our two churches.

A strong community like ours has its issues and conflicts, different opinions, tensions through personality, hurts by words and actions. I admire you for the way forgiveness is celebrated through reconciliation and in a few cases through acceptance and the magnanimity of those involved to move on. There are wonderful people in the community who are blessed with the gift of building community.

Pastoral Care

I believe that we do provide wonderful care to our parishioners. Fr Bob, Fr Ben and Liz Clark together with various members of our community

care for parishioners with deep commitment. Our sick and elderly especially are not forgotten. I hear great stories about parishioners supporting and caring for others in the community.

Hospitality and Welcome

Many new families have moved into our parishes and we do welcome them and show hospitality. Curry nights, morning teas, Chinese New Year celebrations and other occasions have proved to be great opportunities in welcoming others. I encourage you to continue to welcome others into our community, remembering it is important to move around and speak to others outside our own circle of friends. Our pilgrims who were with me on the pilgrimage to Italy in 2006 have been great in the way they have moved around at social functions; it says a lot about our inclusive and welcoming community. I believe the group that needs our attention now are the young adults and foreign students. How can we nourish them?

Youth

'The Basement' at St Clare's is nearing completion. The Whitefriars College students have been instrumental in the refurbishment process and this year they are working in the quadrangle area. Julian, Kathy and Di are planning a few things for our youth and they have been instrumental in organising billeting for pilgrims during 'Days in Dioceses' in Melbourne, prior to World Youth Day 08 in Sydney. Congratulations are due to those young people who presented the 'Youth Stations of the Cross' for the Cross and Icon event at Our Lady of Victories on 2nd May.

Future Plans

In January I was struggling with the workload and trying to keep up with all our commitments with difficulty, especially with staff on holiday. Fr Ben and Fr Bob are very generous with their time and are very committed to parish ministry, but they too are getting tired and age is catching up with them as well. I am aware that we are not able to keep up with all our present commitments and sooner rather than later some things will have to change. Liz has indicated to me that she has been thinking about cutting her work hours and I will not be here forever, so some realistic planning for the future is necessary. It is also demanding trying to run two separate parishes, so we have slowly put in place a framework that is helping to streamline the organisation of the parishes. We don't lack ideas, but we need suitable people who are willing, and the time to translate words into action.

Congratulations to St Clare's parishioners for the way they have accepted the partnership and have moved forward, however I am aware of their grieving process. I believe both communities have

come a long way. I am inviting you to take the next big step in organising our parishes and training people for ministry with realistic expectations. I know it is not easy and as your Pastor I am responsible to help you to prepare for the future. We have to sacrifice some things in order to have a more life giving experience of our faith.

Fr Anthony Selvaraj ofm
Parish Priest

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE'S REPORT 2007-2008

The past year for me has been a year of cementing and surmounting – cementing the many good programs and activities that are already in place in the parish, and surmounting some of the challenges I find here. The results of the parish survey show that many parishioners are well satisfied with most of the things that are happening in the parish. As well, there were quite a few very helpful suggestions in the areas of ‘things we don’t do well - yet.’ I am constantly mindful of our need to move forward, to plan for the future, to find ways of involving the youth, to present adult education in areas that will be helpful and attractive to you. I know there needs to be a closer liaison between the parish and the school community. I see how much more could be done with liturgy and planning, with the music, with more frequent times for prayer/meditation. I want so much for this parish to offer something to everyone to enable them to grow in the love of God.

This is where the challenges come in.

I have been here so long now, that when people see me coming, they hide for cover, scared of what I might ask them to do next. We have an amazing number of people already involved in all our activities: e.g. each time I send out the SFX ministry rosters; there are over 100 copies to be made – truly indicative of an active and supportive community. Each time we plan doing something new or different, we have to ask the question – who can help? And we go back to the list of the same faithful people who are already deeply committed. My greatest challenge seems to be in involving everyone. If each person took on one task it would all be simple. But that doesn’t seem to be the way it works, and honestly, I no longer know how to do this. It continues to afford me concern, challenge and cause for thought.

I will list below the groups/people that contribute so wonderfully to the life of the parish, but I cannot close this report without particular mention of my RCIA experience during the year. Our meetings started with 8 enquirers and a number of

parishioners who agreed to give support in different ways – as team members, sponsors, prayer supporters. Brother Paul and I were fairly much newcomers to the process, and we learnt as we went along.

It was really hard work, but personally I learnt and grew an incredible amount, as well as gaining greater confidence in my own abilities to share the important message of the gospel with others. When I look back now at our new Catholics, I am struck by the way the group itself gelled – these people really love each other – they listen, they respect one another’s views, they encourage and support one another – they are even arranging to keep meeting on an ongoing basis, as they find the thought of ‘deserting’ one another too painful. They bring such freshness and joy, openness and wonder, happiness and light to our community. This involvement has been the greatest blessing of my year.

I want to offer my most sincere thanks to all parishioners involved in the groups listed below. They are the ‘salt’ of Box Hill, and without them, we could do nothing. I list them in no particular order of importance or involvement, but as I type this, I am truly mindful of the individuals and all they give us. Some of these groups have made reports of their own, but I will mention them again. Thank you. I wish each of you every blessing.

Parish Pastoral Council – both current and retiring members have made concerted efforts this year to respond to the needs and hopes of the whole community. They have cooperated closely with the friars in various ways, and supported many of the activities in the parish.

School community – I wonder what a parish would be like without the hope and promise that a school brings to it. Staff and parental involvement is amazing. Our children receive a wonderful education, many opportunities to find God in their lives, and hope for a bright future. This is the busiest place in the parish most days, and the life and energy of the whole community is one of the strong signs of God’s love in action in Box Hill.

Baptism program - is presented to all families bringing their first child to the parish for baptism. Those who conduct the program do so with joy and energy, and offer a warm welcome to new families.

Autumn Friendship Group - What a wonderful group of wonderful women (mostly), who support one another through all the highs and lows of life, and have a great time along the way. They are truly inspiring. This year, a number of their members have gone to their eternal reward, and they really need an injection of younger members. Would you

consider joining them – I can assure you that it will be a great adventure for you.

Children's Liturgy – This group is mostly composed of school parents who are anxious for their children (for all our children) to gain a better understanding of the Mass, of scripture, of their place in the church. Sunday after Sunday they prepare special celebrations of the word, so that the children hear the day's message from a more simple perspective. Simple activities reinforce what the word is telling the children. A great deal of time and planning goes into this ministry, but the results are so worthwhile.

Counters/collectors - Most of us would think very little about the money side of the parish. You would be surprised to know just how many people are involved in these important tasks for the running of the parish. We rely on the honesty, integrity and expertise of many people to take up the collections, count them, recount them, bank, record, analyze and acknowledge payments.

East Timor Support Group - During the early part of this reporting period, this group was particularly busy raising money for projects for our partnered parish in East Timor. They were well supported by parishioners, and the school community has held special fund raising events to offer support to the school at Weberek. They are expecting to begin more fund raising in the near future.

Food at the Barn - This group, in conjunction with the churches of Box Hill, continues to offer a very important service to people in need in the community. Approx every 10 weeks, they cook a hot meal for about 50 people at the Box Hill Baptist Hall. As well as 'doing the job', I understand they have a great time together during the preparation.

Hospitality - This is a huge area, and one in which we intend to make more effort in the coming year. It involves many things – welcoming at Masses, preparing tea/coffee for morning teas after Mass and on special occasions, assisting with funerals if required. I see that welcoming is a hallmark of a vital parish, and hope that many more people will make themselves available to be part of this important ministry.

'Godstart' - This is a program which endeavours to forge a link between a child's Baptism and the time when he/she starts school. Each year, on their birthday, one of our visitors calls into their home with a birthday card, prayer booklet, or a set of 'How to teach children about God' brochures to keep families informed of all that is going on within the parish. It is proving to be an important connection for young families who at this stage

don't manage to attend Mass regularly – a great outreach program.

Marriage preparation - It's sad that currently we are down to only 2 couples who are available to present the FOCCUS program to engaged couples. From that point of view we are fortunate that we have had so few weddings here this year. It is an invaluable part of a couple's preparation for marriage – spending time discussing the hopes and dreams, concerns and possibilities of married life with people who had the experience of marriage. It has been part of this parish's tradition to offer this service locally, and I hope that more couples would consider this ministry to our young people – the future of our church.

Ministry to the sick - How important it is for the sick and elderly to feel included in community life here. We are blessed in having generous, warm, caring people to visit the homes and nursing homes in our area, taking communion, reassuring people of God's love, letting them know what's happening here, helping them feel at least somewhat involved in the parish. This is a vital ministry, one which I see as spreading the Good News in a gentle and compassionate way.

Playgroup - This group has had an exciting change during 2008, with its move to the classrooms at St Clare's. They are very fortunate to be able to leave all their equipment out rather than have to pack up and put away each week, and it has eased the load on the parents enormously. The classrooms are beginning to take on their own new character, with walls and windows being decorated, and the outside playground being upgraded. A visit to Playgroup is a joyful though rowdy experience. Numbers are growing quickly, and there is a wonderful sense of fun and companionship that is almost tangible.

RCIA has already been mentioned above. Most sincere thanks to all who have helped this to run so smoothly. And - an urgent plea to other parishioners to consider involvement in the coming year. This is the way we fulfil our mission to go out to the world and spread the gospel. We need many more people to be involved.

Sacramental program - We are blessed with 5 catechists who prepare the children not attending Catholic schools for the Sacraments. The program is now (ideally) over 3 years, with children attending in Grade 2 for Bible stories and simple prayers, Grade 3 for First Reconciliation and Grade 4 for First Communion during the 2nd and 3rd terms each year. There are also separate classes in preparation for Confirmation. St Clare's classrooms have proved ideal for teaching, and we have about 15 children in the Grade 2 – 4 program, and 15 in

the Confirmation classes. This is a demanding role, magnificently filled by our dedicated and untiring catechists.

Sacristy - At both churches we have amazing people who set up for Masses daily, arrange flowers, wash, clean and repair linen and vestments, serve on the altar and make themselves available for whatever the priest requires on the day. At St Clare's a faithful group continues to clean the church too – they are remarkably diligent, thorough and faithful. They all have the friars' deep gratitude.

Lenten study - This year we were delighted to have so many people meet together to discuss the coming Sunday's readings during their Lent preparation. There were groups at both parishes, at Bedford Heights, and in private homes. I am certain that this involvement assisted all those who took part to celebrate Easter with new understanding and perception.

Ministry - So many people assist with the liturgy by their involvement with ministry of the Word, of Communion and of Music. We have had training sessions during the year, and the Advent Gift sheets encouraged quite a few new people to volunteer. There are excellent readers at both churches, and Ministers of Communion are faithful, thoughtful and reverent in their service. Our organists and singers are very faithful too, and provide great support to the liturgy, rising to the occasion when anything extra is required. Music ministry will be something that the parish will look at carefully this year. We would love to hear from musicians, singers, anyone with the ability to implement positive change in this area.

Liz Clark
Pastoral Associate

ST FRANCIS XAVIER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

I am pleased to provide an overview of the 2007-year at St Francis Xavier. The school enrolment remains stable at 370 students. The 2006 - 2010 School Improvement Plan is in place and the 2007 component of the plan was successfully implemented. The annual plan concentrated on enriching and improving the Religious Education program in the school, continuing the full implementation of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards focusing on improving Literacy and Numeracy, developing student social skills, strengthening staff performance and ensuring a strong relationship with the school parent body.

I am proud of the academic standards reached by students at the school. In the 2007 state-wide testing carried out in Victoria at Year 3 and 5 levels, St Francis Xavier students performed well. No one test can give a complete picture of a child's learning, however, the *Achievement Improvement Monitor* (AIM) is one indicator, which tests a significant cohort of 59,000 students in Victoria. On that test students at St Francis Xavier performed on average above the average of all other Catholic schools in Victoria and above the average of state school students in *all* 10 areas of Reading, Writing, Spelling, Number and Mathematics at *both* Year 3 and Year 5. This is a great achievement for our students and our teachers.

Academic standards are paramount but they are not everything. Students have participated in a comprehensive range of extra curricular activities, which enhance student enjoyment of school, develop extra skills, consolidate on skills as well as build confidence, self-esteem, independence and teamwork.

The sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation and Eucharist were celebrated with students and family support. Staff members worked towards making these celebrations meaningful in the children's lives.

Attitudinal data was collected by surveying parents, students and staff on their level of satisfaction with the school. There has been a concentrated effort on putting plans in place to improve all levels of performance at the school i.e. there is a culture of continual improvement.

There has been a strengthening of the role of the Leadership Team, which is serving to raise the professional standards.

The annual school concert was again a highlight of the year.

It is planned that the new school building comprising five classrooms a library and a toilet block will be completed and ready to move into for the beginning of the 2009 school year.

My thanks go to the friars who are always there to support the school. I thank Fr Anthoni, Fr Bob and Fr Ben for their continued support.

Carmel M Purdey
Principal

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL REPORT FOR THE 2008 AGM

Acknowledgement

The Council acknowledges that the lands on which the parishes are located are the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people and we pay respect to their elders.

Council members

The Council comprised the following members during the 2007- 2008 year: *Ex Officio:* Fr Anthony, Fr Ben, Fr Bob, Liz Clark, Carmel Purdey, Monique Waring and Dianna Hardy.

St Francis Xavier Parish: Karen Nolan, Monica Nitz (Joint minutes secretary), Vince Fazio, Veronika Bellis, Clare Hangan and Michael Robotham.

St Clare's Parish: Trish Nicholson (Chair), Julian Sakowski, Jennifer Micheli (Joint minutes secretary) and Liz Allan.

We thank outgoing members Julian Sakowski, Jennifer Micheli, Karen Nolan (members from 2005) and Michael Robotham (member from 2007) for their valuable contribution to the Parishes and their involvement in the many activities during their council membership.

Mission Statement of the Parishes in Partnership

We, the people of St Francis Xavier's and St Clare's parishes, celebrating God's presence and our faith values through worship, outreach, service, justice and hospitality.

Procedure

The Parish Pastoral Council has met on the first Thursday of each month over the past year with the exception of January. In order for new members to understand their role as a Parish Council member, Liz Clark has led the meeting with a reflection on the role of the Parish Pastoral Council within the life of the church. Monthly reports from the Parish Priest, the Pastoral Associate and the St Francis Xavier School Principal are received and discussed by the Council at each meeting. Financial information from both Parishes was included in the Parish Priest's report where necessary. Each member of the Parish Council was assigned and was responsible for various portfolios within the church community. These include the Youth group (Julian Sakowski and Dianna Hardy), Communication portfolio (Monique Waring), Social Justice (Karen Nolan and Michael Robotham), School Community (Vince Fazio and Clare Hangan), Welcoming / Hospitality (Veronika

Bellis) and Adult Education (Trish Nicholson). Reports from each group were presented to the committee at each meeting.

Activities

A reflection day was held in October last year with a focus on developing a Pastoral Plan which includes a consideration of leadership in the community, Pastoral needs within the parish, and the future role of the Pastoral Council. A development plan from that day, which took into consideration the preliminary results from the parish survey, was for the Council to be more visible to the members of both Parishes. A letter from the chair was attached to the weekly newsletter, informing them of the Parish Council function within the parish. All members of the Parish Pastoral Council were commissioned at a ceremony in February, introducing them to parishioners at both St Francis Xavier and St Clare. It has been proposed and supported that a biography of each member will be published in the newsletter over the following weeks so that parishioners are able to identify the Council members within their parish.

St Francis Xavier School

Regular reports regarding the activities of the school have been received throughout the past year. After much planning the renovations will be commencing this year. The school has been vibrant in the offering of catechetical programs and ongoing development that is seen as an integral part of the school curriculum. Carmel Purdey and all staff members of St Francis Xavier School are to be congratulated on the exemplary behaviour of students and developments within the school that have been reported to the Council.

Communication Portfolio

Ongoing development of the website has continued with relevant newsworthy items being made available for parishioners to access.

Youth Group

A number of youth activities have been organized during the past year, including a tennis day, pizza night and movie night. These activities have been fairly well supported by the youth from the parish. Julian Sakowski was willing to take on the role of World Youth Day 2008 coordinator for the parish. This has involved attendance at a number of functions to ensure the active involvement of the parish in this special event. Julian provided an overview of WYD at all Masses, and an information brochure was attached to the newsletter on Easter weekend, inviting parishioners to become involved in 'Days in the Dioceses' by offering a bed to international visitors.

The Cross and Icon arrived at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Deepdene on the 2 May with the procession arriving at Our Lady of Victories, Camberwell later that night. The youth group of St Francis was invited to lead an hour of prayer during the night, which they did by re-enacting and focusing on the youth interpretation of the Stations of the Cross. What a special event that was for those who were present to witness this performance! The youth are to be congratulated on their outstanding effort and performance and it is hoped that they will continue to participate in youth activities such as a regular youth Mass at St Francis.

Kathy and Julian Sakowski are interested in developing the youth group within the parish by offering the young people the opportunity to meet on a regular basis and participating in various activities. We thank them both for their involvement and support in this most important activity within the parish.

Social justice

A trivia night was arranged last year with over \$3000 raised for East Timor. A fantastic night was had by all who attended due to the fantastic and witty efforts of both Julian Sakowski and Martin Hardy.

Mental Health has been a topic of discussion and an information session is to be organized to coincide with Mental Health Week.

Social Group

In July last year, all parishioners were invited to share in Fr Bob's celebration of his Golden Jubilee. This event was well supported with standing room only for those who attended. Father Bob was especially honoured with members from his family present to share with him on this very special occasion.

Christmas lunch was organised for the more mature members of the parish at the end of last year, with many of the youth serving at the meal during the afternoon.

Welcoming committee

Veronika Bellis has taken on the role of welcoming new parishioners. A welcome pack is provided during the visit to ensure that parishioners are aware of the various Mass times and other services offered within the parish community. A great effort has also been made by parishioners in welcoming new attendees at Mass over the weekend.

School community

Links are being forged between the school and the parish community with Vince Fazio and Clare

Hangan actively seeking out opportunities for those families attending St Francis Xavier School.

Other activities

A representative from the parish was invited to attend a special function to receive a **message stick** on behalf of the parishes. The message stick has been on display during special celebrations such as Social Justice Sunday.

The RCIA program has been very successful over the past year with 6 candidates baptised at Easter. The weekly publication in the newsletter provided some insight about the candidates involved in the RCIA Program.

Lenten programs offered in preparation for Easter were well supported within the parish

Last November the **SFX Tennis Club** celebrated 50 years. On behalf of the Parish Council, we congratulate all members and wish you well in the future.

Last year **Fr Peter O'Neill (ofm)** provided an insightful presentation about Franciscan spirituality and ecology.

Mass times at St Clare's were changed last year with no midnight Mass being offered on Christmas Eve. The issue of Mass times is an agenda item for the Parish Council to consider the options that may be considered in future. A decision will be made after the census has been completed at both Parishes later this month.

Whitefriars College students involved in a VCAL project completed their work on the **St Clare's Basement** towards the end of last year. On the 13 April this year, the youth were invited to visit the basement to view the changes that had been made. While the attendance was not great, those who did attend were enthusiastic about the opportunity of being able to use 'The Basement' for future youth activities. Well done to the Whitefriars' students on a job well done. Your achievements have provided the opportunity for the parish to provide an area specifically for the youth.

Work is already underway for the VCAL students once again from Whitefriars College on the quadrangle area outside "The Basement". The plan is to provide an entertainment area for a BBQ when using "The Basement".

During November last year a **RSL Memorial Mass** was celebrated with many prominent members of Whitehorse Council attending. Father Bob also celebrated a special Anzac Mass last month.

A major project, undertaken last year, involved undertaking a **Parish Survey** at both parishes. A survey questionnaire was developed and piloted on 10 parishioners. They were able to provide feedback on the format of the questionnaire prior to it being made available to all parishioners. 185 questionnaires were received and dutifully processed by Mary Rossely and Jennifer Micheli. Thank you both for the hard, tireless work. This has resulted in a comprehensive report providing a working document for the Parish Council to plan for the future needs of the parish. A spreadsheet has been prepared, noting the items that have scored low in the survey, and a decision will be made each year about the items that will be considered for action by the Council. The most important items that have been identified this year include the development of youth activities and the opportunity for parishioners to become more actively involved as laypersons in leading services in the parish. A comprehensive report will be provided for all parishioners to review the outcomes of the survey. Thank you to all the parishioners who completed the survey. Your feedback has provided the Council with the opportunity to address the issues that you considered important. It should also be recorded that there was overwhelmingly positive feedback received about the Friars. How wonderful it is to note that the hard work and dedication, with which Fathers Anthoni, Ben and Bob approach their work within the parish, has been reported in many of the survey forms returned.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a special word of thanks must be extended to all the members who will be retiring from the Council after the AGM. The functioning of the Parish Council is only made possible by the selflessness of the volunteers who offer their time to provide support to the parish community. I thank all the members who will remain members of the Council in the coming year, and trust that we will be able to continue the hard work that has been the focus of the Council in the past. I would also extend my thanks to the Parish office staff for providing the administration support to the committee throughout the year. A final thanks must be extended to the friars who serve the community so tirelessly. While watching the Friars celebrate every Mass, we are reminded of how fortunate we are to have them present in our community. Their selflessness, unassuming manner and the humility with which they serve God provide us with an opportunity to witness first hand the Franciscan way of life. Thank you to Fathers Anthoni, Ben and Bob (including Father Peter).

Trish Nicholson (Chairperson)

FRANCISCANS IN PARTNERSHIP – ECO PASTORAL PROJECT EAST TIMOR

Promoting Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

BACK GROUND INFORMATION

East Timor became an independent nation in 1999 following decades of war that left the country ravaged economically, environmentally and spiritually. It is the poorest country in Asia and perhaps the most ill equipped to deal with the devastation inflicted upon it, especially the ruin exacted by the departing Indonesian military and militia forces. Yet there is hope in East Timor. The Franciscan Friars in East and West Timor are part of the Province of Indonesia. In March 2004, Fr. Stephen Bliss, Val Mooney and Julie Morgan accepted an invitation from the Indonesian Provincial to visit the friars in East Timor. They were moved and inspired by what they saw. Since then others have joined the team, working out ways that can express our solidarity and commitment to the people of East Timor while deepening our own sense of what it means to be Franciscan. Our Parishes of St Francis and St Clare together with the Townsville Parish have formed a partnership with the Parish of Alas in East Timor.

Partnership One: 2005-2008- Our First Initiative Local farmers trained in organic and sustainable farming techniques and care for the earth.

This project in Dotik will provide:

- > Resources
- > Training
- > Employment
- > Nutrition

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO DO?

- To form a partnership for the next 4 years with the parish of Alas.
- To learn from the people of Alas.
- To establish a subsistence farming project in the Dotik area.
- To provide funds for the training of local farmers who will in turn train others.
- To fund accommodation during training and provide farming equipment.
- To raise \$3,000 from each parish per year for the project

St Francis Xavier’s School has a project with the school in Weberek (Dotik) for the support of teachers and for a project yet to be decided. In 2006, The Parents and Friends Association raised

\$2,500.00 from the school fete to contribute to this project.

WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED?

A committee of interested persons from both parishes has been meeting regularly trying to find ways of implementing the above objectives. One of the main challenges has been raising an awareness of this venture to our parishioners.

Throughout the last couple of years we have attempted to keep parishioners informed of our fund raising activities and as well as the money raised. A thermometer has been placed in the foyer of both churches; this thermometer records our progress in reaching our financial objective for the year.

We began our fundraising for the year with a highly successful and entertaining Trivia night. We are very grateful to all those involved in the organisation of the night, as well as those who provided the prizes. Our next event was the concert where we were entertained by, The Melbourne Chorus of The Sweet Adelines, the Harmony Capers' Quartet, Lucy Pfeiffer and her friends Diane Loi and Abby Hunt, from the Melbourne Conservatorium, and the talented young violinist Matthew Chan. As always we received strong support from our local parishioners. As we had met our yearly target we decided not to produce our Christmas gift cards this year, but they will return in 2008.

We have recently received a report on the progress of the Eco Pastoral Project, accompanied by great photos. They locals have planted 6 different crops which appear to be flourishing, dug 5 wells to water the crops during the dry season, fenced off the area correctly and planted several trees. Many of the local people were employed in the development of the land etc, which is important considering the very high rates of unemployment in East Timor. The Friars have also set out plans for the future. The money that the school and the Parents and Friends Association have raised over the last couple of years has been used to provide desks and chairs for the primary school in Weberek. This report was also accompanied by photos. It was important to receive these reports and to be able to pass on the information to the people who have so generously supported the projects over the last couple of years.

We are now ready to begin our next series of fund raising event and once again look forward to entertaining you. If anyone is interested in joining our group, or has any exciting ideas, please contact us via the Parish Office.

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. The total collected for the financial year ending July 2007 was \$1716.39. The total for this year (to April) is \$1374.95. The money is put directly into the Mission bank account, so no expenses are incurred.

Imelda, Ivan, Judy

FRANCIS/CLARE CHARISMATIC PRAYER COMMUNITY REPORT

Meets St Clare’s Parish Hall
Monday [School Term] 10.15am to 11.45am.

This month[May] marks the 9th anniversary of our Prayer Community.

St. Paul writes about prayer meetings in 1 Cor14:26 “When you come together each of you brings a psalm or some instruction or a revelation, or speaks in a tongue or gives an interpretation. Let all these things be done in a way that builds up the community.”

A substantial period of our prayer meeting is dedicated to the praise and worship of God.

Through praise, we declare and acknowledge that God is in control, in every circumstance.

Most of our songs are simple and easy to sing. This is one of them:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful face
And the things of earth
Will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.

As we honour and worship Jesus as Lord, we seek to surrender all to Him. We desire to be used by Him as we continually ask the Holy Spirit to melt, mold and fill us. To empower us to discover and use the Charismatic gifts He has given. We pray for one another's needs.

We treasure our time sitting around the table with tea and biscuits after the meeting. This is a time of getting to know one another. We come from many surrounding parishes with between 16 to 22 each week. Clare Vandenberg is missed by us all after she and Reg moved to Pakenham. Clare started the group with five others and was our leader for a number of years. John Parker is a wonderful blessing to us with his music. We do have fun together and invite you to come and see! Fr Anthoni comes to celebrate Mass for us once each term. This is always advertised in the Newsletter and everyone is welcome to join us.

Olive Hammill. 9878 4103

THE KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS - BOX HILL BRANCH YEAR ENDED 30TH APRIL, 2008

The Knights of the Southern Cross is an order of Catholic Laymen whose objects are to:

[a] promote the advancement of Australia.

[b] foster the Christian way of life throughout the nation.

[c] promote the welfare of its members and their families.

[d] encourage social and intellectual activities amongst its members

[e] conduct and support educational, charitable, religious and social welfare works.

To these aims we give support to Catholic charities such as Right to Life ,Southern Cross Care, Sacred Heart Missions to the Homeless, Palliative Care, Mary of the Cross Centre, the Family Care Sisters, Open Door, the Mother of God Brothers, the Priests Support and Education Fund, the Franciscan Missionary Society and assist members in need.

The funds used to provide this assistance were raised by our members through sausage sizzles, the sale of raffle tickets outside churches in the area [for which we are most grateful to the respective parish priests], assisting at the Lion's Op Shop and collections and raffles at our meetings.

We are thankful for the support given to our fundraising activities by the parishioners and to the Friars at Box Hill for their continued support, especially for the use of parish facilities for our meetings.

The Branch members make visits to members in hospital and in nursing homes. At our meetings members pray for the intentions of members and for our deceased members. We provide assistance at the Cathedral as ushers at ordinations and other functions. There has been an increased call for ushers this year with World Youth Day functions.

The 2007 State Conference of the Order was held at Marcellin College in October 2007 and our members helped with the running of that event.

Members participate in a Formation Program which involved this year a study of the issues associated with World Youth Day. We write to politicians and public figures on topics that affect the moral wellbeing of the community. This year members were involved in writing to politicians against the introduction of legislation for the decriminalization of abortion and the legalization of euthanasia.

Membership of the Order is open to all Catholic laymen committed to the practice of their religion. This year we have lost two of our members including one very active member. We would welcome new members, young and not so young.

Meetings are held on a monthly basis at St Francis Xavier's.

The Order is an Australia wide organization which is affiliated with the world body of Catholic knights.

*{Frank Kenna – Branch Secretary –
9849 0667 }*

LEGION OF MARY – ST FRANCIS XAVIER PARISH, BOX HILL

We have 6 working members. Three of these are parishioners in this parish. They help with Altar Duties, as Eucharistic Ministers, lead the Rosary daily at the 12 o'clock Mass.

Our Legion meeting gathers every Tuesday after 12 o'clock Mass. The meeting commences at 1.15pm. We open with the Rosary. The meeting concludes at 2.30pm with the members given duties of visiting the aged, lonely and sick, also retired members. Box Hill Hospital is visited weekly, '40 Dorking Rd' and other Aged Care facilities. The

following week a report on the work done the previous week is given.

If at any time the Parish needed our help, we would be happy to oblige. Thank you for allowing us to operate in the Parish.

PIETY STALL REPORT FOR PARISH AGM

The Piety Stall is provided for the benefit and convenience of all Parishioners.

Every effort is made to keep the Stall well stocked with a variety of religious gifts and cards for all occasions. Books for children on the angels, saints and prayers and children's' Mass books are proving very popular. Our prices are very reasonable.

Christmas is our busiest time having ample stocks of Franciscan and Columban Calendars and St Vincent de Paul Christmas cards. By selling these calendars and cards, we are given the opportunity to support these organisations in a meaningful way.

We endeavour to open the stall after each Mass on Sunday; our volunteers are usually very reliable, and we thank them sincerely for the time they put into this Parish work. We are always looking for extra help, so if anyone would like to volunteer their services for this worthwhile Parish work, we would be very happy to hear from you. There is no age barrier for our volunteers; we have them from 20 to over 80 years of age. You would be required to serve on the stall after the Mass of your choice every 5 or 6 weeks. If you can assist us please contact Pauline Green on 9848 1384, or contact the Parish Office.

"ALL THINGS SOCIAL"

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TUMN FRIENDSHIP CLUB 2008

Another year of companionship, support and activities for Seniors of the Parish and the Whitehorse Community has passed. We meet every Thursday of School Term and would welcome new members.

ACTIVITIES – Bingo, Ten Pin Bowling, Film Lunches, Picnics, Board Games, Dine Out, Blumes Fashions. Trish's Treasures, Soup and Chat with Liz Clark and helpers, Oaks Day Celebrations, Lunch and Entertainment at Parish House, Avon Lady.

GUEST SPEAKERS – Sr Joan Mack spoke on "Our Lady of Sion Project in the Phillipines", Father Michael Court on "Spirituality through Magic", Retired Fireman from MFB.

COACH TRIPS – Corio Bay, Toomuc Valley, 'Francis Haven' at Guildford, Woodlands.

FUNDRAISING – Research for Cancer Treatment.

SPIRITUAL – Noon Mass and Anointing each Term, Mass at St Francis Church, Melbourne.

From the Committee

MOSAIC LADIES AT ZANTE

Over the last couple of years 'ladies' from the Parishes have gathered for an informal chat over a coffee or glass of wine at ZANTE Restaurant in Whitehorse Rd. 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.

SINGLES GROUP

Several years ago a number of single women parishioners shared the view that it was difficult for them to find a suitable niche within the parish that would enable friendships and a sense of belonging to develop and grow – they were not school parents nor were they Autumn Friendship contenders, and work commitments usually precluded them from volunteering in many parish activities.

They began to meet occasionally to share a meal and social interaction, and the group has continued to grow as new "Singles" - both female and male – have been identified within the Parish. Many new friendships have been formed; a sense of connection and of being part of the parish has grown. All members look forward to the opportunity to catch up and enjoy social chatter with their friends over a casual dinner at a restaurant or hotel, every two to three months, usually on a Friday night. We also see each other around the parish and we look out for people new to the parish, welcoming them. If you would like to come along please contact the parish office.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Over the last 12 months the social committee was involved in several functions.

A very successful dinner night was held at Da Pino's Restaurant and was attended by approx. 60 parishioners.

Fr. Bob's Anniversary celebration was held in July with Mass followed by an informal supper /dinner in the Parish Hall. As expected the night was very successful and attended by many parishioners & family & friends of Bob.

A Parish Picnic – walk – bike ride was held in October and unfortunately was only attended by a couple of people.

The Annual Seniors' Christmas Luncheon was a great opportunity for the senior citizens of our community to gather with friends and parishioners, share a meal, sing a song or two, and enjoy the hospitality of the parishes.

We would like to extend an invitation to anyone wishing to join us, we only meet when necessary and the meetings are very social. Please contact the Parish Office if you would like to join the committee or have some ideas for some activities.

We wish to extend our gratitude to the many people who have assisted in any way to the activities and especially to parishioners who attended the functions; we have had a lot of fun arranging them for you. It is great getting the community together for some social interaction and we hope you will support our efforts.

ST. CLARE'S KIOSK - ANNUAL REPORT 2008

Your Kiosk, located beside the garage of the Parish House, is open on the SECOND SUNDAY of the month following both the 8.30 and 10.30 am Mass (February to December).

Kiosk patronage has grown over the last 12 months with March and April this year breaking all records (based on consumption).

It was a hot day in March and cold cordial was a favourite at the 10.30 Mass with Tea and Percolated Coffee being favoured at 8.30 Mass. The second Sunday of April was cool with Tea and Coffee consumption well above normal and a number of people made use of the tables and chairs in the garage to enjoy their cuppa, biscuits and homemade delicacies whilst enjoying a friendly and relaxed chat.

If you have not tried the Kiosk please do so, with the compliments of the Parish, and with your Tea, Percolated Coffee or cordial enjoy a brief chat with old acquaintance or meet some new friends.

To our wonderful, friendly group of volunteers who staff the kiosk we say “**THANK YOU**” on behalf of the Parish Family and Fathers Anthoni, Ben and Bob.

Kiosks volunteers, usually in groups of two or more, consist of individual families, a couple of relatives or two friends or parish acquaintances. On a number of occasions some of these great people

surprise us with homemade delicacies much to the delight of those attending the kiosk.

Additional volunteers are always welcome and if you would like to assist as a volunteer please contact the Parish House on 9898 5080 or speak with Fr Anthoni or give me a call on 9898 5708.

John Jesse

WALKING GROUP

In September 2007 our young, fit and active Parish Priest, after consultation with several older, not-so-fit-and-active parishioners, established a Parish Walking Group. All parishioners were invited to participate, and a dedicated group -including our friars when commitments permit - has taken part every Saturday morning since September, with the exception of a three-week break over Christmas and New Year. We meet at 9.00am for Morning Prayer in the Parish House Meeting Room, then walk (or stroll) for an hour - approximately 5 kms - and return to the Parish House for coffee and a chat.

Not only do participants enjoy the physical and social aspects of this activity, but we have observed and marvelled at the wonders of God's creation in the beautiful bushland trail and the leafy streets of Blackburn and Laburnum: the sparkling morning sunshine, the colourful lorikeets and warbling magpies, the smooth-as-silk silver trunks and wonderful aroma of the lemon-scented gum trees, to say nothing of the magnificent red, orange and gold autumn colourings of the majestic oaks, elms, Liquid Ambers and ornamental grapevines in gardens and on nature strips along the way.

There is no limit to the numbers who can take part in this activity, so an invitation is extended to all parishioners. We would love to see you some Saturday morning

TENNIS CLUB REPORT 2008

The Tennis Club has had another successful and active year in the provision of tennis facilities to the parishioners of both St. Francis Xavier's and St. Clare's Parishes.

50th Anniversary Celebration

The big event for 2007 was the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Club with a function at the courts on 17th November 2007.

A b-b-q, ball machine and a demonstration of the re-stringing of President's (Mike Cervetto) racquet by José Fernandez made for a very enjoyable day.

There was a good turnout with representatives from the commencement of the Club in 1957 to current junior members.

Of note Bernie Tenni attended. He owned the court in Watts Street that was used during the early 1950's for social games of tennis organised by Fr Phillip Smith from which the idea of forming a Parish tennis club originated.

Mavis and Bill Murphy helped the tennis club come to fruition and it was great to see Mavis attend. She is now 90 years of age. Sadly Bill passed away in 1990.

Fr Anthoni, Father Bob and Fr Ben attended and Fr Anthoni spoke very well to conclude the speeches. Geoff Charles welcomed everyone to the celebration and gave a short history of the Club. Leo Soulsby followed and spoke of his 40 odd years as a member of the Club and had some interesting anecdotes of his playing days.

The contribution of Shirley Wick, Yvonne and Allan Charles, and many other past and present members, to the administration of the Club was acknowledged.

The function was a celebration of the effort of many people over many years to ensure that the Club survived and continued to play a significant part in the life of the Parish.

The superb tennis facility is testament to the foresight of Bill Murphy and Fr Conquest in establishing the Club and the resilience of many people, in particular Fr Stephen Bliss, to ensure that the vision of Bill and Fr Conquest continued.

Membership

The strong membership base has been maintained with membership currently at 200 members with over 60% of those members from family memberships.

Courts

The court complex is in great condition and receives professional maintenance each six months. Pavers have been laid in the area outside the Clubroom and it is proposed to install sail cloth over the pavers.

Committee for 2007/2008

President: Mike Cervetto
Secretary: Geoff Charles
Treasurer: Shirley Wick

General Committee: David Thai, Joan Biterli, José Fernandez

Junior Convener: Shirley Wick

Tennis Activities

- ◆ Club junior coaching
- ◆ Primary school coaching
- ◆ Sion College competition tennis
- ◆ Sunday junior competition tennis
- ◆ Social tennis: under lights on Friday evenings (daylight saving period), mid week ladies and Saturday mornings
- ◆ Adult tennis coaching
- ◆ Competition tennis: mid week ladies, junior Sunday morning and mid week under lights

Competition Tennis

The Club is very active in competition tennis and in the last year entered teams into the following competitions:

- ◆ 4 teams in the *Blackburn and District Night Tennis* competition
- ◆ 2 teams in the mid week ladies *Eastern Metropolitan Region Lawn Tennis Association* competition
- ◆ 3 teams in the junior Sunday morning *Eastern Region Tennis Association* competition

Thanks

Special thanks are given to:

- Shirley Wick for the outstanding job she is doing as junior convener and attending to the many management tasks that ensure the Club runs smoothly.
- The *Saturday Morning Social Group* for the excellent maintenance of the courts and surrounds ensuring that they are in the best condition for member use.
- Yvonne and Alan Charles for managing the supply of competition balls and the court key ensuring that member access to the courts is available at all times

Information

Further information about the Club can be obtained from Shirley Wick 9898 1509 or Geoff Charles 9874 2704

Geoff Charles (Secretary)

FINANCES

ST CLARE'S PARISH OFFERING COMMITTEE FOR 2008 AGM

Members: Fr Anthoni, John Jesse (Chair), Kevin McDonald (Treasurer), Kevin McMahan

(Secretary), Michael Keown, Eddie van Sebille and Dom Yurcina.

Two members of the committee have died since our 2007 report, Joe Cleary on 24 May 2007 and Bernie Miller on 8 November 2007. We acknowledge with deep gratitude the significant contributions made by these men to the work of the committee and to the parish generally.

Meetings: The Committee normally meets June and December.

Functions: The Committee remains responsible for

- . Organising Mass collections
- . Checking and counting contributions
- . Assisting with record keeping as required
- . Assisting with issuance of receipts and envelopes and
- . Assisting new contributors

An integrated Thanksgiving Campaign operates for our parishes. We share the same envelopes and the same data recording and receipting system. The funds received are credited to the relevant parish.

Appreciation: The committee gratefully acknowledges those parishioners who organise and assist with collections at the various Masses.

Parishioners are thanked for their continuing support of the parish. Thanksgiving contributions remain essential to the maintenance and development of parish resources.