

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