



# The Monica September 2016

## St Monica's Parish Moonee Ponds

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Cover Photograph by Mr Dave Tacon



## Greetings from the Editorial Team

Welcome to the September Edition of *The Monica*.

As Spring comes into full bloom and a feeling of rejuvenation is in the air, we hope you enjoy reading about our vibrant parish community.

In the spirit of this community, we would appreciate your input for the next edition of *The Monica*. In our final edition for 2016 we would like to take an opportunity to celebrate your memories of the year. Whatever has brought you joy, happiness, or comfort we would love to feature. Please feel free to send your pictures or words to *The Monica* via email, and we will feature "Our Parish 2016" in our special end of year edition.

Once again, we would like to thank all who have contributed to this edition. Without the hard work of our volunteers we couldn't produce such a bumper issue each quarter.

Enjoy!

**Spring  
Has  
Sprung!**



## Happy 70th Birthday Father Tony!



## A Pastoral Letter

It is the last day of August, indeed the last day of Winter, resplendent in glorious sunshine, as write these few words.

It has been a cold season and all of us, I am sure, are beginning to enjoy feeling the warmth of the Spring sun and the lengthening of the daylight hours. New life abounds as we see the signs of growth everywhere!

How do we measure growth?

One way is in inches or centimetres – how much our children have grown during these Winter months or how many inches/centimetres we oldies have put on around our waists during the same!

The sprouting of blossoms might signal time for a renewed bout of exercise to combat those creeping kilos!

Speaking of growth, how do we measure 'growth' when it comes to our faith life?

For the past few months we have, as a parish, been praying for our young people preparing to celebrate their First Holy Communion, a cause for joy not just for them and their parents but for all of us in St Monica's parish.

First Holy Communion is an event in the life of every parish when all of us who have celebrated our own First Communion (no matter how long ago) are invited to ask themselves: 'Where does the regular celebration of the Eucharist fit into my life?'

Here at the Lord's Table we celebrate the greatness of God's love for us. Here we celebrate and welcome the God who comes to nourish us in life and in faith. Here we celebrate the God who gives us one another as 'Companions on the Journey' as we strive to live our lives as a people of faith, hope and love.

As we leave the cold and the dark of winter behind, may we all come alive in every aspect of life, including that of our faith!

In November, as a part of my holiday break, I will be visiting Nepal and an orphanage there that people in our parish Thursday Prayer Group have been supporting for quite some time. Whilst there I will leave money I have been saving, which will also include the money many of you gave me for my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Thank you for your birthday wishes and for your generosity that enables me to provide some support for the children in this Nepalese orphanage.

## Parish Profile : CATECHISTIC EDUCATION AT ST MONICA’S PARISH

The vital role of preparing children for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation is currently undertaken by two dedicated parish volunteers Diana Dumapias and Dayanthie De Silva. St Monica’s catechistic education program has been wholly volunteer-run for many years and as such is a credit to the people of faith who give graciously back to the Parish by dedicating their time and expertise.

Children from non-Catholic schools in our Parish attend Sunday school at 9.15-10.15 am, allowing families to attend Italian Mass or 10.30 am Mass later in the morning.

Numbers in the classes vary from year to year with groups ranging in size from 16 or 5. Dayanthie and Diana work seamlessly together, when Dayanthie finishes preparing the children for their First Reconciliation, Diana in turn will prepare them for their First Communion.

At commencement of Sunday school, students are given a catechetic resource which forms the basis of their religious instruction. Some children are very new to the Catholic faith and must learn the basics such as making the sign of the cross, when to kneel and stand at Mass and learning the *Lord’s Prayer* and *Hail Mary*.

Dayanthie began volunteering at St Monica’s soon after migrating to Australia 25 years ago. She believes her choice to serve God and the community has in turn made her life better. Indeed, within two weeks of commencing Parish service Dayanthie received an offer of full time employment and attributes this stroke of fortune to God’s loving hand.

Diana believes God sends you to His people in need-wherever they may be. She arrived at St Monica’s in 1994, having tried to volunteer elsewhere, as it was the only Parish in need of a catechist at that time. In 1995 Diana was taught by Sr Kate as she undertook the three-year Catechist Diploma course at St Monica’s, one of the few local parishes offering the Diploma course.

Sunday school is a supportive environment which aims to nurture a love and understanding of the Catholic faith. There is a strong focus on the stories of the New Testament and the teachings of Jesus. Diana and Dayanthie encourage their young students to form a real and lasting relationship with God, to talk to him daily and to find comfort and strength in the knowledge of his love for all of us.

A VERY SPECIAL "THANK YOU"  
to Mrs Dayanthe DeSilva and Mrs Diana Dumapias for their magnificent work in preparing the Sunday School group of children for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.  
We are indebted to these two ladies for the time and effort they have put in each Sunday morning over many years. Once again "Thank You".



On 16th August , Fr Tony celebrated Mass in honour of 3 Sisters of Charity celebrating the 60th Anniversary of their vows. Sr Patricia Nunan, resident at St. Monica's. Sister Patricia Scully who was Principal of our Primary School (1963-1969)(Sr.Jerome) and Sister Helen Galvin — amassing a combined 180 years of service to the Lord between them. Sr. Kate O'Brien presented them with blessing from Pope Francis. Congratulations Sisters on an inspirational life of service. God Bless.

# Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation

In the second week of July, Year 3 students participated in the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. In the lead-up, students discussed the meaning of Reconciliation with their teachers, and were asked to think about the things in life that they do well, and also to ponder the behaviours and attitudes that they can improve on. Particularly times when they made a bad choice, recognising that by examining their conscience, they can make a better choice in the future.

When administering the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Fr Tony and Fr Minh met students individually at either end of the altar. It was a reverent atmosphere in our magnificent Church, yet as each child approached they were warmly welcomed and engaged in conversation prior to their formal Reconciliation.

Following what was a private chat (I asked my son Charles what he'd discussed with Fr Tony and I only got a wry smile) each student received a gift of a crucifix and a final blessing. Children were then asked to say a prayer as an Act of Contrition. Overall it was an extremely positive experience and an important step towards receiving their first Eucharist in October.

Here are some thoughts about Reconciliation from participating students:

Chelsea Pesavento: I felt nervous because I had to talk to the priest about things I do wrong in my life but afterwards I felt like I didn't have anything to worry about.

Charlie Arnold: Reconciliation means that I was forgiven for doing something wrong.

Emma Billing: Reconciliation is a time to be forgiven.

Charles Barrett: Reconciliation means I am forgiven. After I spoke to Fr Tony I felt very happy and he gave me a crucifix necklace which was really nice.

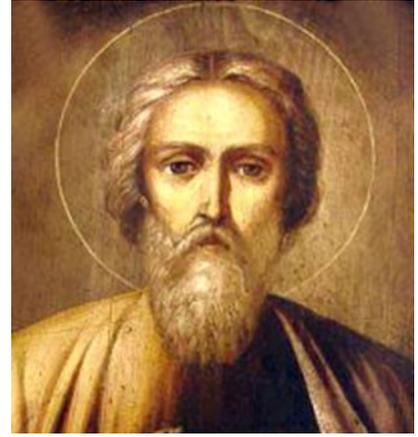


“Create  
in me a  
clean heart,  
O God,  
and put a  
new and right  
spirit  
within me.”  
Psalm 51:10



## St Matthew

The feast of Saint Matthew is celebrated on 21 September 2016 so it is timely to revisit the life of this significant saint, apostle and evangelist. .



Matthew was a publican, a tax collector of his fellow Jews for the Romans for a large personal profit. It was a profession that was hateful to the Jews and regarded by the Pharisees as a typical sinner. As a publican, he was not allowed to trade, eat or even pray with other Jews.

One day, while seated at his tax collector's booth, Jesus looked at Matthew and with just two words - "Follow me" - Matthew left his previous life and followed Jesus as one of the twelve apostles. After his call, Matthew invited Jesus home for a feast to which the Jews criticised Jesus for eating with tax collectors and sinners. Jesus explained that he had come "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance".

In his ministry, Matthew first preached to the Jewish community in Judea before preaching in other countries, which is believed to include Egypt, Ethiopia and further east. Unfortunately, not much else is known about Matthew in his later life. The Church holds the tradition that Matthew died as a martyr, whilst others believe he died from natural causes in his 90s.

**For you make me glad by your deeds, LORD; I sing  
for joy at what your hands have done.**

*50 years of marriage*



On 31st July Eva and Syd Angsiting celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary with Mass at St Monica's.

Eva and Syd have been Parishioners for over 30 years.

Fr Tony officiated at Mass, which was followed by a wonderful family celebration.



The Parish congratulations Eva and Syd on their long and happy union!

## St Monica's Parish Play Group

Every Wednesday morning between 9.00am-10.30 when the school-aged children have gone to class, the silence of St Monica's school hall is interrupted by the joyful laughter and raucous fun of pre-schoolers enjoying playgroup.

Mums (and sometimes a guest of honour dad), arrive and head straight to the store room to bring out a selection of toys, which have been kindly donated by the parents and friends of St Monica's over the years.

There's always a roster – one parent organises an activity and another parent provides morning tea each week. Activities are generally messy affairs – with many kids keen to try their hand at painting, gluing, and cutting and let's not forget the joys of glitter! There are plenty of blocks, balls, cars and prams to keep those kids not keen on craft happy as well. After activity we enjoy a morning tea of fruit and biscuits, and a cuppa for the parents.

We all lend a hand to tidy up afterwards, before finishing with a goodbye song. In the midst of all this chaos there's a golden opportunity for both children and parents to forge new friendships. Yes, there are plenty of those half-finished conversations that seem to be the lot of parents with young children. There's also the occasional ear splitting tantrum to be endured (mostly from the children), and a fair amount of noise and mayhem too. But it's lots of fun and an overwhelmingly supportive and accepting environment for all parents with young children. With the playgroup a regular fixture in the school calendar for more than six years, its wonderful example of the rich St Monica's community in action.



## Grandparents & Special Person Day

Grandparents and special people are indeed special as they fill children's lives with love, laughter, warmth, wisdom and generational values. What better way to recognise and honour their vital role in our families than to dedicate a day of celebration!

On 21 July 2016 St Monica's school was abuzz with grandparents, parents and special people who joined the children and staff in celebrating Grandparents and Special People Day. The celebration kick-started with a beautiful church service where Fr Tony shared some insightful messages. It was wonderful to see the children so well behaved and engaged. Everyone then proceeded to the classrooms where grandparents and special people immersed themselves in the beautiful and colourful surrounds. The children were excited to show their work off and in a 'yesteryear theme' grandparents were quizzed about school in the 'olden days' with some classes playing traditional games such as knuckles, elastics and pick-up-sticks with their special visitors. There was much enthusiasm from adults and children alike as they shared this special time. Some children even had gifts made specially for their beloved visitors to commemorate the occasion. The wonderful morning concluded with a scrumptious morning tea.



The celebration was very successful. Children were reminded to show their love, respect and gratefulness to their grandparents and special people for the many great things they have done for them. For the visitors, they came away feeling encouraged and respected for the important role they play in the children's lives. Without a doubt, they are already looking forward to the next event where they can share some more memories with the special young people in their lives.

# Charismatic Prayer Group

St Monica's Charismatic Prayer Group :- The meetings take place every Thursday evening 7.45pm in the Symons Centre. The programme usually includes Songs of Praise and Worship, Prayer , Bible Readings.

An atmosphere of Faithfulness is present , it is a time in one's life where one can experience the presence of God with people of like Faith, a time to give thanks for all He has done for us and to place before Him our petitions and hearts desires. A Father ,Son and Holy Spirit Mission will be held on the 27th October, 3rd November and 10th November concluding with a Healing Mass 17th November. All Welcome, put these dates in your diary.



# St Monica's Tennis Club

The Club Championship's are currently underway — to date the Men's Singles has been played , our new Club Champion is Robert Giaquinta, with runner up Dominick Laguda.

Robert played at the Club as a Junior, had an absence from the Club for some years and has now returned to the Club with brother Remo. An impressive return!

Mixed Doubles was played Sunday 14th August, and whilst competitive it was also a very enjoyable social day. The Champions were Alexander Moodie and Jerry Cresp, runners up, Bec and Patrick Sicilia.

A Plate Event (first round losers ) was held for this event and the winners were Felicity and Anthony Jordan defeating Margaret and Russell Mogg in a nail biting tie breaker 8-7.

The Club continues to thrive and with Steve Riley's Coaching Programme producing a number of quality juniors, the future looks promising. The real future of the Club is dependent on an active and progressive Committee, Team Managers and Team Captains . We are fortunate to be in that position at present , Peter Clarke has done an excellent job in his role as President and has had great support from all Committee members. The AGM is on 28th August in the Club Rooms commencing 7pm.

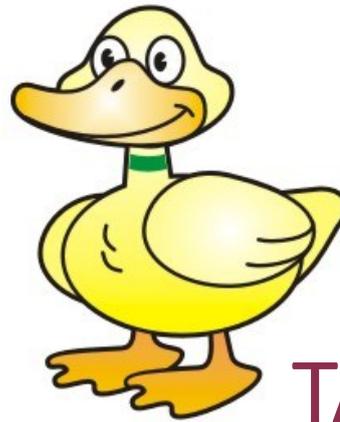


At the Moonee Valley Community Awards 2016, Russell Mogg was recognised for decades of service to St. Monica's Tennis Club. He was presented with the Sport Award. Russell has been on the Committee for 46 years, a mightily impressive innings! Congratulations Russell.





A



TALE

Fr Tony and Lesley-Ann were disconcerted by some mysterious noises emanating from one of the tall chimneys of the Parish House the other day. Initially the loud bangs were thought to be the rattling wind, then Lesley-Ann sensibly suggested a trapped possum. Imagine their surprise at the appearance of a most unexpected sight—a feathered friend that was freed thanks to the kind efforts of the hastily-summoned fire brigade! Here is the whole story...

## The duck that lost his way - By Fr Tony

During August, on one windy day, Mr. Duck lost his way and ended up falling, falling, falling until he came to stop in some dark place. He didn't know what had happened to him. The last thing he remembered was sitting on a chimney high up in the sky and now he was here, down in some dark lonely space, lost and cold.

Mr Duck heard some voices, coming from where he did not know. He rattled around making as much noise as he could. The voices stopped. Had they heard him? He did not know.

He rattled around some, more making more noise until tired out, he lay down to rest in the darkness that imprisoned him .

Suddenly Mr Duck was awoken by voices, different voices, and a tapping on his prison wall. What was happening? After a little while a small glimmer of light entered the space where Mr Duck lay prisoner. Something reached in.

At first Mr Duck was scared of the something, the hand of the fireman that reached in. He flapped around wildly, frightened by the hand that that felt around trying to take hold pf him. Finally worn out by all his flapping around Mr Duck relaxed and allowed the hand that reached in, gather him up and bring him out .

Out in the light, as he lay relaxed in the hand that had rescued him, Mr Duck saw not one, but three firemen, and Fr Tony, who had come to rescue him.

Assured that he was alright, the firemen took Mr Duck outside and set him down on the grass. For a little while he was a bit wobbly on his feet, staggering a little from left to right.

After a little while Mr Duck found a bowl with some water in it. Being thirsty, after a long day in the dark, he was so thirsty.

Feeling refreshed and anew, with a new lease of life Mr Duck spread his wings and flew up into the blue sky heading for Queens Park and safety there, vowing to never sit on one of St. Monica's chimney ever again.