

The Monica December 2019

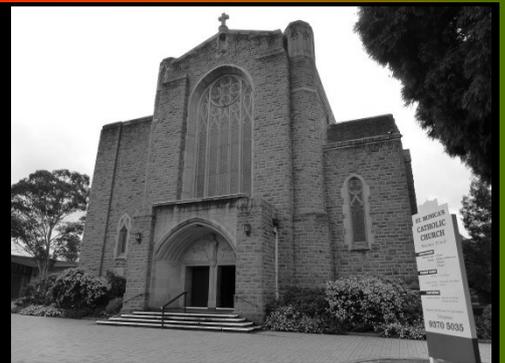


St. Monica's Parish Moonee Ponds

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From the Editorial Team

It's been a whirlwind of activity in St Monica's Parish since our last publication. Our school recently held a very successful fete which was a fun and fabulous celebration for the whole community, raising valuable funds for school infrastructure and equipment.

While many of us are busy planning end-of-year celebrations and thinking about holidays, we have also been thinking about others. A group of enthusiastic volunteers and the St Monica's Children's Choir added a festive touch to the Golden Oldies luncheon on 4th December, an opportunity for us to make our older parishioners feel special and celebrate the Christmas season together.

In this edition, we introduce the wonderful Fr Andrew Choi, who joins us following his Ordination in Melbourne, after beginning his journey to the priesthood halfway across the world in South Korea. We celebrate the Sacrament of First Communion; our Year 3's reflecting on their special day. Carmen Richardson chats to Franco Priscoglio from St Monica's Italian Prayer Group and Eakcawin Manopsakulpon examines the significance of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

We also present the St Monica's Parish financial summary for the first time, plus a whole lot more!

Enjoy our final Christmas edition of the Monica for 2019. We would like to thank all our volunteers for their work in bringing our parish magazine to life. They are: Natalia D'cruz, Lisa Mammola, Carmen Richardson, Melanie Lambertini, Yvonne Yuen, Eakcawin Manopsakulpon and Jo Barrett. Thanks also to our friends in the Parish Office - Fr Tony, Sonya Bading and Abygaile Cukavac for their assistance and support.

God's blessings for 2020!

**The Editorial Team
Jo Barrett and Natalia D'cruz,
The Monica Co-Editors**

A Pastoral Letter

A Message from Father Tony

The days have passed into weeks and weeks into months and now we stand on the threshold of celebrating another Christmas and welcoming in a 'new' New Year.



Looking back, it has been a year of profound change for our parish as we farewelled Fr Thomas and welcomed Fr Trevor and Fr Andrew.

It has also been a year of change for Fr Andrew and Fr Trevor - Ordination to the Priesthood for Fr. Andrew and Fr Trevor commencing as a Lecturer in Sacred Scripture at Catholic Theological College.

Some of our families have experienced the profound change that comes with the death of a loved one; other families have coped with the change that comes with seeing their 'baby' commence school; others again might have experienced it in their having had to relocate and make new friends. None of us is exempt from change.

In the clamour, confusion and sometimes conflict that change brings into our lives and indeed our ever-changing world, our God tells us that we are not alone, His loving presence is with us in Emmanuel, the One whose birth we are preparing to celebrate at Christmas.

So it was: in the 'fullness of time' God sent His Son, born of the Virgin Mary, sent to assure us that whatever the clamour, confusion and conflict change brings in our lives, He and His love are always with us.

May the warmth and strength of His love come to you this Christmas and go with you into and throughout the New Year.

On behalf of Fr Trevor, Fr Andrew, Abygaile, Sonya, Domenica and myself, I wish you and all your families a Holy and Peace-filled Christmas!

Fr Tony Feeney

**Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year**



St. Monica's Parish Profile: Fr ANDREW CHOI

Written by: Melanie Lambertini



When I was eight years old, I was baptised: my great-grandma led me into the Catholic faith at that time. Like other young people, however, I was quite distant from the church because I liked to go out with my friends rather than going to church. After graduating from high school, I had an opportunity to serve as a Sunday School Catechist, and I did it for seven years in my home parish. I also served as an organist during the same period. With these experiences, my faith-life changed. It was with great happiness that I could do something for Jesus in his Church. In particular, as a Sunday School Catechist, I met Jesus Christ in the hearts of my school children and even in my own heart too, and this led me to answer the inner calling from God.

From time to time, the thought of becoming a priest did not leave me. I knew for sure that it was not just a ridiculous dream, but a real calling that came to me. However, I did not know what step to take next. So I

asked advice from my parish priest and he said, "God is calling each and every one of us as lay people, as a religious, or as a priest. It is our part to respond to that calling. And please do not forget that God always wants you to be happy". I took his advice seriously and became more convinced about my own vocation, and eventually, began to prepare for the Seminary.

In February 2009, I entered the Archdiocesan Major Seminary of Seoul in Korea, and with an unexpected opportunity, I was able to move to Melbourne in 2016. Last September, I was ordained as priest by Archbishop Peter Comensoli in God's merciful love. No one can assume the way of God's Will, it is sometimes very unexpected. I will never let this happiness go away, and I am very sure that this is God's Will for me.

Thank you for warmly welcoming me. It is great to be here at St Monica's Parish with you all. Please keep me in your prayers and thoughts, definitely you are all in my prayers and thoughts too.

Yours faithfully in Christ,
Fr. Andrew Choi

Welcome to St Monica's!

St. Monica's Parish Primary School: **First Holy Communion**



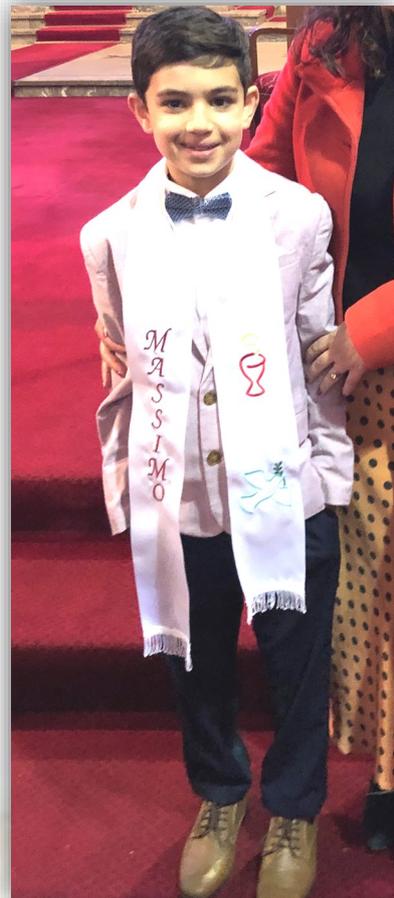
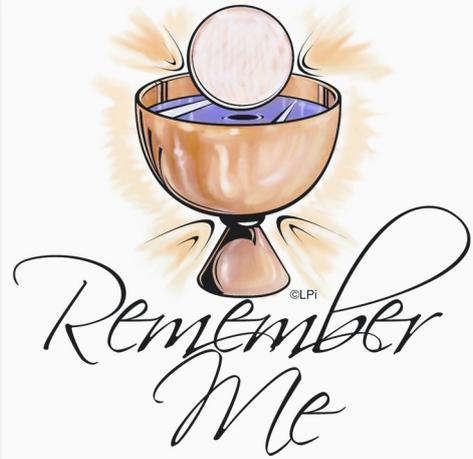
“On the 13th October I made my first Holy Communion. I was feeling a little bit nervous and I was also feeling excited to receive the Holy Communion. During the mass I was chosen to bless a baby who was preparing for her baptism. I was the second one to receive the Eucharist. Father Tony and Father Andrew were there to present my communion. After mass I went for lunch with my family. I had a great time at my First Holy communion.

AMELIE CARCHEDI



ARIANA GAUNT

St. Monica's Parish Primary School: **First Holy Communion**



MASSIMO

St. Monica's Parish Primary School: **First Holy Communion**



My communion was on Sunday 13th October 2019 at 10.30am. This was an exciting day. I wore a white dress and flowers in my hair. Father Tony was present at my Communion Mass. I felt a bit shy walking into the church but felt better when I was with my friends. After the Mass we returned home and we had a lunch celebration with all my aunties, nana and pa, uncles and cousins. I felt happy because all my family came to celebrate with me and we all had a good day together.

MIA MALTMAN
Grade 3 K



ALEXANDER MCBEATH WITH FR TONY



CHARLOTTE THAUS



First Holy Communion Thanksgiving Mass : 31.10.2019

Written by: Lisa Mammola



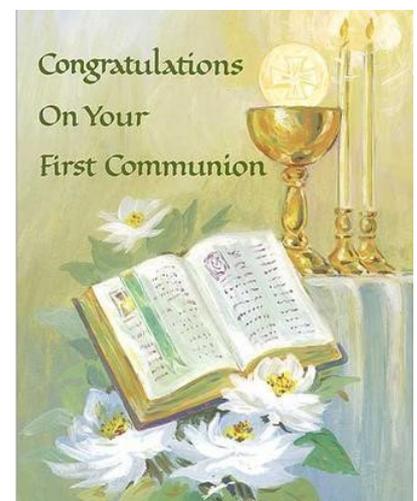
The Communion Mass of Thanksgiving is a mass organized in the week following the weeks of First Communion celebrations. It was the first gathering of all the children celebrating their Communion at St Monica's this year. They came together to acknowledge and give thanks to this wonderful sacramental milestone.

Father Andrew asked each candidate present to reflect on this celebration; what it means to consciously choose as young Catholics to receive their First Communion.

The wonderful outfits and the celebrations with family and friends are certainly special, but he asked them to remember and cherish the true gift of the celebration, the gift of the Body of Christ, a gift that will help each of them to be strengthened and nourished by God, again and again and again. A very special gift!

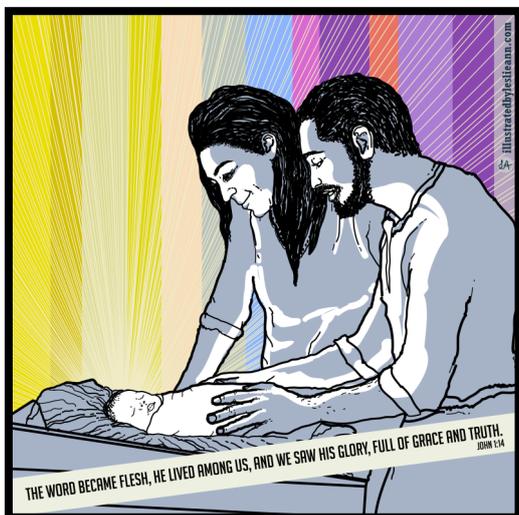


The beautiful service was followed by a brunch of muffins and Big Ms, which was very well received, just in case all the smiling faces didn't give that away. It was a great way to mark this special celebration.



First Holy Communion Thanksgiving Mass : 31.10.2019

Written by: Lisa Mammola



 **Prayer for a Child's First Communion**

Lord Jesus,

Bless the children coming forward to receive Holy Communion for the first time.

May this day be an initial step into a life-long love of the Eucharist.

Give them a hunger for this sacred food so that they turn to you for comfort, guidance, and wisdom as they grow into full discipleship.

Thank you for their innocence and goodness.

May their hands, extended in anticipation of your Body and Blood, inspire all of us to cherish this sacred sacrament.





First Holy Communion Thanksgiving Mass : 31.10.2019

Written by: Lisa Mammola



Congratulations
On Your First Holy Communion

FATHER JUSTIN GLYN SJ : **The Gifts of being a Priest with a disability**

“Many of our parishioners will fondly remember Justin Glynn SJ, who spent time at St Monica’s as a Deacon. He may stand out in people’s minds as he is a person with a disability; in his case, vision impairment. The following article by Justin is thought provoking for all of us who take our sight and so many other gifts for granted”.



Recently, I was honoured to be asked to write an article on life as a priest with a disability for the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst's *Sandpiper* magazine. I found it strangely difficult for reasons I will try to explain.

I was born with nystagmus (eyes which cannot focus), short-sight and a squint (partially repaired) — mostly the result of a quirk of brain development which led to a lump of useless tissue pressing on my

optic nerve. This also seems to have resulted in epilepsy (controlled by medication).

This has had two results. One is that I am legally blind — the world is a fuzzy blur without definition. The other is that I have never known anything different and so have nothing to compare it with. My world has always been blurry with most of my information about it coming from what I hear.

What does it mean to be a priest with a disability? I don't really know since I don't know what it is to be a priest without one! The vision I have is improved by a pair of telescopes and by text enlargement software — but it is very much a secondary sense. This, however, is the way I was designed — with both its plusses (good memory, good language and musical ability and other gifts) and its minuses (you will be amazed at how unenthusiastic my community is about letting me drive!).

Despite all that, I think that in some ways to be a priest with a disability is to be at a strange advantage. We tend to think about priesthood as a gift and a calling — and so it is. It is not, however, about merit, of saying 'I am better than you / uniquely gifted'. A merit-based attitude has led to a ghastly sense of entitlement and power leading, at its worst, to the clerical sex abuse crisis.

Instead, the priesthood is a call to enter the hurts and joys of other people's lives from a position of *weakness*, not strength. We share the sacraments as equals. Those of us with a disability are well aware of our weakness, our limits. We know that the call to salvation in Christ is not a call to perfection as an individual. Instead, it is a call to meet other people's vulnerability with our own, to empower others by finding strength in togetherness and letting the wounded Christ shine through our powerlessness so all can live in him.

FATHER JUSTIN GLYN SJ : **The Gifts of being a Priest with a disability**

This is, of course, not unique to priesthood. It is a part of the Christian calling more generally, and arguably goes beyond even this. The doctor, the lawyer, the teacher: all are called to put their gifts at the service of the whole, while aware of the weakness that needs to be supplemented by others.

"Those of us who experience disability know that we are limited. These limits are not hindrances to be overcome but part of the very fabric of our being. Our limitation is, however, only different in kind and degree to the limitations experienced by everyone."

We cannot lean on the crutches of ability on which those without an obvious disability might be tempted to rest. Indeed, the siren song of the prosperity gospel is to claim that you too — with enough effort and self-improvement — have perfection (of mind or body) within your grasp. You have only to 'have a go to get a go' and the world will be your oyster. Society need make no place for the useless eaters who have not bothered to realise their own gifts.

As anyone looking through the eyes of empathy knows, however, succumbing to the sirens leads to the rocks of desolation as one either founders on the social realities of exclusion (it doesn't matter how many goes one has when there are five jobseekers to every vacancy) or discovers that too much is never enough to meet the ever shifting expectations of a society in which the gulf between rich and poor widens daily.

No — those of us who experience disability *know* that we are limited. These limits are not hindrances to be overcome but part of the very fabric of our being. I have been reminded of that often enough — whether by the actions of people, such as physical bullying, or just by inability to do things which others take for granted.

Our limitation is, however, only different in kind and degree to the limitations experienced by everyone. We are all born weak and incapacitated and, if we live long enough, will die that way. A theology and religious praxis which fails to take this fundamental fact of humanity into account sells both the individual reality of life and the Incarnation which we believe sanctifies it, short. It is this gift of awareness of limitation and dependence on others which people with disability, especially priests, can bring to the world around us.



Fr Justin Glyn SJ has a licentiate in canon law from St Paul University in Ottawa. Before entering the Society he practised law in South Africa and New Zealand and has a PhD in administrative and international law. This is a revised version of an article that originally appeared in Sandpiper, the Catholic Newspaper of the Sandhurst Diocese.

Parish Financial Summary :

FINANCIAL RESULTS OF ST MONICA'S CHURCH - JAN 2019 TO SEPT 2019

The Profit and Loss Statement attached below for 9 months ending 30 September 2019 shows that we made an Operating Surplus.

Our Stewardship (envelopes) collection increased slightly from 2018 to almost \$158,000 (\$4,100 per week). In addition, loose money collected each weekend was over \$46,000 (\$1,200 per week). Thank you for this wonderful contribution. Our other major sources of revenue come from the levies we charge for conducting Weddings and Baptisms as well as Rent we receive from 29 Robinson Street.

The building of the Symons Centre had left us with a large debt - as at February this year we were able to repay this loan in full. Our ability to repay this loan earlier than expected was as a result of the generosity of all parishioners. Thank You!

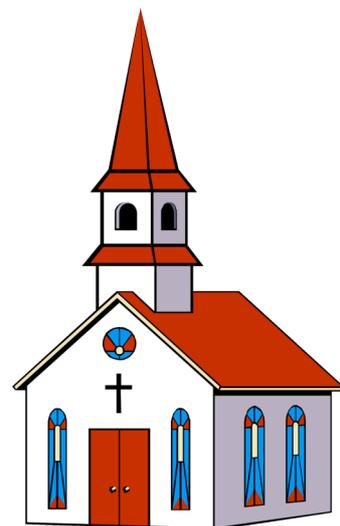
The Church is the most important building on our property and has to be adequately protected. Insuring the Church and other heritage buildings has become quite expensive – in 2019, it will cost \$61,000 (\$1,200 per week) in Insurance.

Regular and preventative Repairs and Maintenance to parish plant valued at over \$60m is also very expensive. So far this year we have spent almost \$40,000 (\$1,000 per week).

Like everyone, we are feeling the effects of increasing Utility costs. In the 9 months to September, we spent almost \$17,000 (\$400 per week), after taking advantage of a collective purchasing program arranged by the Archdiocese.

Thank you for your ongoing contribution to our Parish.

ST MONICA'S FINANCE COMMITTEE



Parish Financial Summary :

St Monica's Moonee Ponds

Profit and Loss Statement for the 9 months ended 30 September 2019

	9 months Actual 2019 \$
INCOME	
Thanksgiving envelopes	157,875
Loose Money	46,851
Donations/Candles	11,442
Wedding/religious services	73,619
Interest received - CDF	1,916
Rent	25,029
Other income	0
TOTAL INCOME	316,732
Less	
OPERATING EXPENSES	
Church and pastoral expenses	6,127
Parish Office costs (incl Secretarial and Pastoral Associate salaries)	93,167
Gardening and Cleaning expenses	7,001
Repairs and Maintenance	39,929
Insurances	45,641
Interest charged (incl interest on 824 Mt Road loan)	2,157
Utilities	16,546
Diocesan Extension Fund	24,597
Other	9,178
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	244,343
OPERATING SURPLUS	72,389
NET CASH SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	72,389

Meet Our Parishioners : Franco Priscoglio - St Monica's Italian Group

Written by: Carmen Richarson

There are some amongst us who juggle a busy work and family life with a strong commitment to St Monica's Parish. One such person is Franco Priscoglio, who kindly took the time to elaborate on his role with the Italian Pastoral Group of St Monica's.

Franco Priscoglio joined the Italian Pastoral Group about 10 years ago. He is the current Vice President, chairing meetings that occur 4-5 times per year and assisting with the mammoth task of organising the Feast of the Immaculate Conception Festival at St Monica's - a highlight of the Italian Pastoral Group Calendar each year.

Like many of the people with Italian heritage in Moonee Ponds, Franco's parents were born in Italy. They migrated to Australia from Sicily about 52 years ago. Franco was born in Australia and baptised at St Monica's in Moonee Ponds in 1982.

Aside from his parish duties, Franco runs a large building company, managing about 55 staff and the construction of 300-400 buildings a year. When he is not at work, he loves spending time with his family. He has two beautiful daughters, with his eldest currently completing her Foundation year at St Monica's Primary School.

For those of us who are aware of the Italian Pastoral Group in our community but who may not know much about them, Franco has kindly contributed more detail on the Italian group's activities throughout the year.

One of the main focal points of the committee is celebrating The Feast Of the Immaculate Conception, which generally is held on the closest Sunday to the 8th December. The tradition of celebrating Feast Days, in particular those of patron Saints is very common all over Italy, and so the Italian migrants brought this tradition to Melbourne in the 1950s and '60s.

Saint Monica's adopted the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The Feast day consists of a Concelebrated Mass followed by a procession with the statue of Our Lady around the streets surrounding the Church which is accompanied by a marching band 'Banda Bellini' (playing traditional festive hymns). At the conclusion of the procession we have the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the church. At the end of the Religious festivities refreshments are held in the Symons Centre including food, drinks and live music.

We begin the festivities by commencing the spiritual preparation through reciting the Novena and reconciliation with a candlelight procession during the week leading to the Festival.

Meet Our Parishioners : Franco Priscoglio - St Monica's Italian Group

The Committee raises money to help fund this event through donations, raffle tickets and a lunch that is held every November. This celebration is one that has continued over the years here at St Monica's, one that we are very proud of and that we hope can continue through the years engaging the coming generations within our Parish and that of our Church. Obviously as the older Italian community decreases over the years the festival will potentially also diminish in attendees numbers unless the younger generations come forth to keep the tradition alive.

Our challenge is to continue to inspire the faith of our younger parishioners to embrace our festive tradition with the same love and belief in Our Lady.



**ALL SAINTS DAY : 1st November &
COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED : 2nd November**

Written by: **Melanie Lambertini**



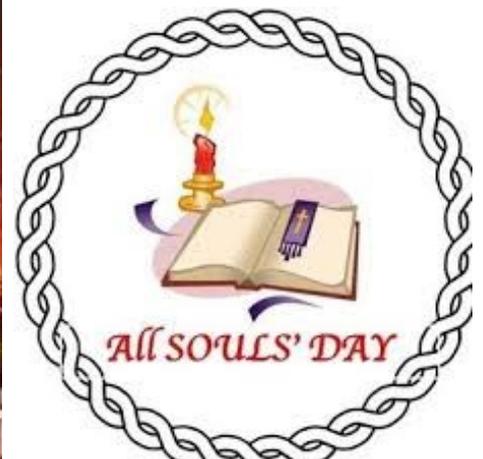
On the 1st of November each year, All Saints' Day is celebrated in honour of all the saints of the Church who have entered heaven.

Halloween stems from this Catholic celebration and in other countries, such as Portugal, Spain and Mexico, traditional practices include performance of the play, "Don Juan Tenorio" and offerings made to the dead.

Across much of Europe, the day is commemorated with offerings of flowers on the graves of those departed. In Eastern Europe, lit candles are placed on graves. In the Philippines, graves may be painted and repaired by family members.

All Souls' Day, also known as also known as the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, follows on the 2nd of November, where prayers are offered for all those who have died, but have not yet reached heaven.

In Mexico, people gather to remember friends and family members who have died and pray for their spiritual journey over the Day of the Dead holy days. In Mexican culture, it is not a day of sadness but as a day of celebration because their loved ones awaken and celebrate with them.



FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY : 8th December

Written by: Eakcawin Manopsakulpon



We celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary with a special mass held annually on (or close to) December 8. This Mass focusses on the concept that the Virgin Mary was conceived without sin. This idea was the subject of much debate from medieval times up until the mid-19th century when Pope Pius IX issued an apostolic constitution, known as the “Inefabilis Deus” on December 8, 1854.

The declaration clarified, with certainty, the long-held belief of the Catholic Church that Mary was conceived free from original sin by a singular grace and privilege granted by God. It was Christ’s redemptive grace that was applied to Mary to prevent sin from reaching her soul and this special intervention resulted in a perfect redemption making Mary immaculate. Although this doctrine took a long time to develop and be accepted, it is now recognised as a solemnity.

Apart from Mary’s uniqueness in all humanity for being born without sin, the Church always considers Mary the greatest and holiest of all saints for her willingness to accept God’s plan for her.

So, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is also a chance for us to reflect and respond to God’s call to our own vocation in order that we carry out God’s plan for our lives and fulfil the missions prepared for us. It is a time to celebrate the great gift from God to humanity in Mary and to understand that all humans are created by God for a particular purpose. This is best summed up with Mary’s greeting of the Angel Gabriel: “Let it be done to me according to thy word”.

Anointing of the Sick/Golden Oldies : 4th December

Written by: Joanne Barrett



A peek at the knitted nativity with its empty crib revealed that baby Jesus had not yet been born, however gazing around the Symons Centre on the first Wednesday in December, one could be forgiven for thinking it was Christmas Day!

Tables swathed in white tablecloths topped with bonbons and tinsel awaiting the feast to come. The community of St Monica's had responded overwhelmingly to the call to donate money in order to provide our treasured older parishioners with a catered Christmas lunch. It was a new idea, hoping to give our Golden Oldies a more 'special' meal than the usual lunch fare of sausage rolls and sandwiches (although they are delicious too!)

An enthusiastic band of volunteers decorated tables and arranged tinsel everywhere you looked. Following an intimate and reverent Mass, including the solemn anointing conducted by Fr Tony and Fr Andrew, parishioners turned to see a welcoming band of Year 6 students who chatted and offered people a cup of Christmas punch. Our volunteer lunch crew served a delicious buffet of vegies, salad, roast beef and pork and ensured a steady flow of tea and coffee from the kitchen. While the Golden Oldies ate their meal, St Monica's school choir sang Christmas Carols pitch perfectly. Dessert followed, including cheesecake, raspberry almondine and the ever-popular mince pies. The kids lingered hopefully, ensuring no food would go to waste!

All in all, the event was a resounding success and feedback from parishioners indicated that the buffet-style lunch was a lovely change. Many thanks to the families who donated money towards the luncheon, the volunteers from St Monica's Parent's Association, DeMaria's for the donation of fruit platters, our Year 6 students coordinated by Michelle Evans and our talented choir led by Suzanne Warzon.





Anointing of the Sick/Golden Oldies : 4th December

Written by: Joanne Barrett



St. Monica's Charismatic Prayer Group of the Sacred Heart

Written by: Gerard Mullen

Report - July 2019 to December 2019

We continue to be blessed by God with steadfast love and support. Thank you, God. Charismatic Renewal is about going back to the beginnings of the Christian Church to adopt and adapt their evangelising effectiveness to our current needs.

Our leadership group considers both our strategic planning and our ministerial requirements. The Morning meeting time has enabled Bernadette, Eva, Jeff and Pam to join the leadership but unfortunately Sam and Margaret are not as available. Adrian, Joe and Gerald continue to attend. Morning meetings will be on Wednesdays at 10.00am next year. In 2020 the prayer meeting will continue on Thursdays at the new time of 7.30pm and fit in supper from 9.00-9.30pm. Thank you to people who have donated to the music ministry laptop. We hope more people can help us reach our \$300 target.

Hope Café has been heartily supported by everyone in the prayer group. Moreover, it has been heartily supported by Father Feeney, all assistant priests, Abygaile, and several helpers from St. Monica's Parish. Special mention to Balwin. Thank you so much to Joe and Tess Manicolo and team of family and friends. Without your vision and energy, it would not happen. We will continue to "café" on the first Thursday of the month, beginning February 2020.

Our prayer meeting has been undergoing some charismatic renewal. We have refreshed our appreciation of prayer tongues, prophecy, understanding the bible, and healing prayer. Next year we will refresh further elements of a vibrant prayer meeting such as testimonies, music ministry, The Kerygma, and Baptism in the Holy Spirit. We will strengthen small group participation and leadership.

Our final leadership meeting for 2019 was Wednesday 27 November.

Thank you for your attendance, prayers and support in 2019.



Dear God, I end this year
with this simple Prayer.
Please heal the broken
people, make well the sick,
restore happiness to those
in despair. Bring love to
the lonely, food to
the hungry and peace to
the world.



Children's Activity Page: **CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD**

Christmas fun

Match the words to the correct pictures to complete the Crossword. Then find a secret message.

bells

Candle

Candy Cane

Card

Chimney

Christmas tree

elf

gingerbread

holly

letter

lights

ornaments

presents

reindeer

Santa Claus

sleigh

snowman

stocking

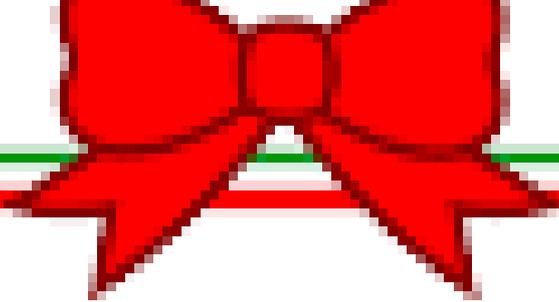
wreath

The secret message is _____

iSLC [lead home](#)

Children's Activity Page: CHRISTMAS CRAFTS





We
Wish
★ you a ★
Merry
Christmas
★ and a ★
Happy New Year

