

Parish Update

Franciscan
Parish
Committee

Lent 2006

INTRODUCTION

The Parish Committee had its first meeting for the year at the Provincial Office Waverley on Friday 17 February 2006.

Most of the meeting was taken up with planning for the Franciscan Parish Gathering

The Theme of which is

"WE HAVE A DREAM

CHALLENGE TO OPPORTUNITY"

10 -13 August 2006

to be held at Chevalier Conference Centre
Kensington, NSW.

Letters of invitation will be going out to those involved within the next two weeks. Please mark your diaries with these important dates.

You will see in this edition some of the highlights of Franciscan Parish life during 2005/2006. We congratulate parishes on their tremendous achievements.

Parishes of St Francis Xavier and St Clare, Box Hill

REACH OUT

Each year we endeavour to "reach out" to our Asian community with a celebration of the Chinese Lunar New Year. A special Mass is celebrated on the first Saturday after the actual Lunar New Year. Oranges are blessed near the conclusion of the Mass and are distributed after Mass – two per person. Oranges being red and gold exemplify the two favourite oriental colours – red the happy colour and gold for prosperity. A delicious lunch is then shared in the Parish Hall, with dishes from many different cuisines in abundance, especially oriental delicacies.

Year by year, different features have been introduced; for example the Lion Dance, Vietnamese children dressed in traditional cultural garments, and special offerings at the Mass, e.g. glutinous rice and fruit.



Box Hill, being part of the Whitehorse municipality, is a very much multi-cultural part of Australia: 113 different languages are spoken in this municipality.

Our parish group/committee which organises the Lunar New Year celebration has worked hard over the years that we have been holding the function, and it comprises people from several Oriental and European backgrounds. They are a very keen and hard-working group and hope to involve many others who can provide input and fresh ideas for the coming celebrations of Lunar New Year.

This year, our parishes have chosen the theme "Reach out" as our focus for the year.

We are delighted to be part of the Franciscan East Timor Project, and see





Friar Brian with Joseph, Mary and shepherds

this as one way of reaching out. Fund raising is well under way.

When the Message Stick was in Box Hill last year, our community made a commitment to finding out more about aboriginal spirituality and culture, to seeking ways of working with local indigenous groups, and to praying for reconciliation and understanding. As a result, we plan to make NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week important events on our calendar, to link with local reconciliation groups and to use some of the many websites to find out as much as we can about how we can make a difference, informing parishioners through our newsletter of important events and information. We see few aborigines in Box Hill, and need gentle reminders that the issues for our indigenous brothers and sisters are still urgent.

Whitehorse Council is seeking help from the parish to supply volunteers for various Commonwealth Games events – we're currently working on that.

Of course, we don't really have to invent anything new or go out of our way to be a community which reaches out to others. So much happens in the parishes on an everyday basis. Things like St Vincent de Paul visits, taking Communion to the sick and elderly,



Three kings and angels

cakes baked, hospital visits, offers of help when someone is ill or lonely or in need of care, pastoral care in the school – a never ending list. We will highlight these simple but important events on a regular basis.

No Room at the Inn

St. Francis Church at Riverside was absolutely packed for the children's Mass on Christmas Eve. There was barely room for Father Brian amid the children and their doting parents, grandparents, friends and visitors. A Nativity Play was presented with a cast of twenty four, three to ten year olds including several Sudanese. Susan Finnigan coordinated the production and made all of the costumes. The effect was stunning. A choir of another dozen children accompanied the play and the music included an original composition by Helen Antel.

Marie Dunphy
West Tamar Parish

News from St Anthony Parish Deeragun and Rollingstone

1. *Establishing a Dotik / Townsville Connection.*

In early February, Julie Morgan visited the parish and spoke at both parish Masses to launch the twinning project between the Franciscan parishes in Dotik, East Timor and Deeragun and Rollingstone in Townsville. She presented the proposal to parishioners and was able to show the parishioners in Townsville a glimpse of life in Dotik. She certainly established the need for this support. At one level there is a request for financial support to establish an eco-pastoral project in Dotik, whilst at another level there is an emphasis on establishing a social justice group within the Townsville parish.

2. *Call for volunteers*

Friar Giles is happy to report the great response received from the 2006 appeal for volunteers. The volunteers were able to offer their services in the traditional areas relating to the running of the parish and the celebration of the sacraments. Additionally, there were opportunities for parishioners to volunteer for membership of groups which may be the basis of continuing adult faith education. As St Anthony's was only established as a parish in 1996 it is heartening to see parishioners take up leading roles to keep their parish flourishing and the Franciscan spirit alive in Townsville.

3. *School News*

St Anthony's Catholic College is now established on two campuses with the secondary section expanding to year 9 in 2006. The primary campus is nearing capacity with waiting lists now established. The dedicated staff of the College continue in their efforts to provide a quality Catholic education to the students of the northern beaches suburbs of Townsville.

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Sharing the Spirit of Christmas

The parish of Mary Immaculate Waverley has a long history of distributing Christmas presents to families in need, with gifts of various shapes and sizes gathering under the huge Christmas tree in the Church over the month of December. In the past parishioners have marked their gift with tags such as 'Boy, aged 9', 'Girl, 2' to indicate in a general way who the gift has been purchased for. Christmas in 2004 saw a more personal dimension added, and one that brought an even greater response from the parish.



Friar Peter Clifford and Lorna looking at the Christmas montage of photos

In early December 2004 a speaker from the Cana Community spoke briefly at all weekend Masses. The Cana Community was established 28 years ago to assist disadvantaged individuals and families, including those who are homeless or suffering a mental illness or addiction. The Cana Community invited the parish to provide a Christmas gift for their members and provided a photo with the name and age of each community member. This simple but much more personal approach resonated immediately with parishioners, as providing a name and a face made the gift giving much more real. Parishioners returned their presents to the parish with the photo of the person for whom it was purchased on the front. The Cana Community made five visits to Waverley over December to pick up the large number of presents donated. We hope that the recipients might also have felt a special buzz to see their photo on the present they received. A simple approach but a powerful reminder of the impact a more personal touch can have on people.



Friar Bernie Thomas addresses Kedron Parish's Street Festival

Parish Street Festival

What a day!! Kedron parish's initial street festival. An initiative of the Parish Pastoral Council in response to our Synod's challenge to engage with the wider community.

For six hours the local streets were cordoned off to make room in a traffic free Turner Road for a community festival. Loads of stalls- exotic food, jewellery, health care, music promotion. A barbecue went all day with drinks for young and old. For the youngsters, animal rides, a mini-zoo, portable climbing wall. Later in the day a 'Kedron Idol' competition, school bands, group dancing, choirs, pop bands and auctions. In the parish hall Chermshire Historical Society had a display, and while people relished their Devonshire Tea, Friar Bernie entertained them at the piano.

All made possible by the great work of Mrs. Jo Galvin, local corporate and parish sponsors, the City Council, and our local parish school, St Anthony's.

It was not intended to be a profit motivated event, but in the end we were able to send a few thousand dollars to Leukaemia Research.

In all about two or three thousand would have passed by, and well entertained around the complex of Kedron's parish church.



Surveying the massive pile of rubbish on Clean Up Australia Day are Br Frank Richardson (left) from Catholic Earthcare Australia and St Clare's parishioners Paul Power, Debbie and Kevin Wright, and Clare, Declan, Veronica and Johanna Power.

St Clare's Community puts Earthcare into Action

Members of St Clare's Catholic Community at Narellan Vale put Franciscan values into practical action on 5 March by participating in Clean Up Australia Day for the third year in succession.

For the 2006 Clean Up, 43 parishioners – ranging in age from 3 to 65 – took part, collecting more than 12 trailer loads of rubbish from the industrial area around the church community's current Mass Centre.

The St Clare's Community, with Friar Allan Hartcher OFM as resident pastor, is part of the parish of Camden, which is under the leadership of Fr Michael Williams PP. Sunday Mass is celebrated in a former Masonic Bowling Club, purchased by the parish 22 years ago.

As the Narellan district has developed, the area around the Mass Centre has become the Smeaton Grange industrial estate. The parish land is crossed by the tree-lined Narellan Creek, but the creek and vacant land nearby have accumulated a lot of litter and dumped waste over the years.

The parish Clean Up effort has grown each year – in volunteer numbers, in rubbish collected and in territory covered. While dumped rubbish still remains in some parts of the industrial estate, parishioners are encouraged by the progress they have made to clean up some areas. Narellan Creek, in particular, is cleaner than it has been for decades.

St Clare's Primary School is also involved, with students and teachers participating in the Schools Clean Up Day on March 3. The students cleaned up the school grounds and the surrounding parish land, going out of the classroom to learn a practical lesson in earth care.