

Parish Update

Franciscan
Parish
Committee

Easter 2007

Dear Parishioners and Friends

It is a delight to see so much happening in our parishes: the very evident Franciscan spirit combined with prayerful liturgies, social gatherings, outreach to others and your commitment to serve those in need. This newsletter gives a few examples. I hope you enjoy reading what is happening around the Franciscan parishes. Thank you for supporting your parish and the friars. Easter blessings to you and your family.

Stephen Bliss OFM
Provincial Minister

St Anthony's Parish Deeragun and Rollingstone QLD

At the Franciscan Gathering in 2006 the parish representatives were able to make two commitments on behalf of all parishioners: (1) to take care of our friar priest and (2) to deepen the understanding of what it means to be a Franciscan parish and particularly to concentrate on promoting Franciscan spirituality.

Reflecting on these commitments has led to the development of a sub-committee structure to focus on key aspects of parish life. The sub-committees focus on: evangelisation, liturgy, community development, formation of children, youth and social justice. The major issues for the Parish Pastoral Council in 2007 are World Youth Day and developing a knowledge of St Francis and the vision for Franciscan parishes.

Our pastor, Giles Setter, was given a Spirit of Thuringowa Award at the end of last year for his contribution to the local community. The award recognised his key role in developing the parish school and more recently the secondary college. "Fr Giles' efforts to develop parish community has ensured a spirit of belonging to this city of Thuringowa."

Parish Committee Meetings

The members of the Franciscan Parish Committee met at the Franciscan Provincial Office, Waverley on Friday 9 March 2007.

Responses from most of the parishes to an invitation to share with the Committee what had been some of the achievements since the Parish Gathering in August 2006 were most encouraging. We congratulate and affirm the parishes in their many initiatives. A summary of events and initiatives is included in this newsletter for your information.

The next Parish Committee meeting will be held in Deeragun (Townsville) on Friday 25 May and the members will stay on to meet parishioners over weekend Masses. All are looking forward to the opportunity of meeting both Deeragun and Rollingstone communities.

The final meeting of this Parish Committee will take place in Sydney on Friday 24 August 2007.

As Christians we are Resurrection people. May the coming Easter season be a source of hope and joy for all.

– *Members of the Parish Committee*

Sr Catherine Brabender RNDM (chair), Mrs Marie Dunphy, Ms Mary Ellen Pattinson, Ms Anne Hampshire, Friars Peter Clifford, Peter Fraser, Allan Hartcher and Anthoni Selvaraj.

*There are different kinds of spiritual gifts,
but the same Spirit gives them. There are different
ways of serving, but the same Lord is served.*

1 CORINTHIANS 12: 4-5

St Clare's Narellan Vale NSW

The Parish Gathering heightened connections between the parish and school. A school representative (Principal or Religious Education Co-ordinator) attends the monthly St Clare's Community meeting and presents a school report.

The school staff is aiming to "reach out" into the school and parish community through our new Community Forum for Wellbeing. This is a group that meets to provide support for those in the community who are experiencing hardship in one form or another.

Our Bishop has called for a "Year of Welcome". So, a letter box drop of an invitation to Holy Week and Easter at St Clare's has been arranged and personal meetings with parents of public school children are part of the Year of Welcome.

A step forward has been taken towards the building of the new St Clare's church by engaging two architects to provide sketch plans.

Sr Catherine White MFIC, keynote presenter at the 2006 Franciscan Parish Gathering:

"Franciscan spirituality is a way of leaning into life"

"The human person is an icon of the divine"

*"Francis' understanding of God sees goodness in all
and seeks to respect the integrity of each person and
all of creation"*

*"The Spirit unlatches the door of one's heart and
breaks the self-enclosed world we inhabit, recreating
us and setting us on the road towards new creation"*

St Anthony and St Thérèse Parish Kedron QLD

As a result of the leadership team of the parish school attending the parish gathering last year, there seems a much closer tie with the school and parish. The school leadership team now assists with leading once a month the children's liturgy at the 9.30 a.m. Sunday Mass.

A re-formed liturgy committee has been set up to help enhance our liturgical celebrations. This group has been very encouraging and supportive of the liturgy.

Because of this group a number of small but noticeable changes have happened for Lent: a simple focus near the altar comprising of a large bowl of ashes and a large candle, holy water fonts filled with ashes rather than water and an empty Baptismal Font. Purple cloths around each holy water bowl at the entrances of the church helps people to notice that there is something different in the bowls!

Two powerpoint screens and projectors have been installed in the church and this has certainly helped with the liturgy. Our thanks to Padua College which contributed to half of the cost of this project.

A youth group has been formed and, while small at the moment, at least it has started. Many of the youth take part in our annual Good Friday Stations of the Cross which, like last year, will take place outside in the church grounds – starting in Padua College grounds and journeying through the church grounds to the final stations near the Grotto. Hopefully from this the Youth Group will grow even stronger.

Morning Prayer of the Church is now celebrated every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings at 7.30 a.m. and at 7.15 a.m. on Fridays. About eight to ten people regularly attend this prayer time.

Our main focus for this year will once again be the Kedron Street Festival in October which was a great success in 2005. It brought parishioners and neighbours together. Proceeds were donated to charity.



*There are different abilities to perform service,
but the same God gives ability to everyone
for their particular service.*

1 CORINTHIANS 12: 6

Catholic Parish of West Tamar Riverside, Beaconsfield, Glengarry TAS

In September 2006 we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Franciscan presence and service in our parish. Great joy and enthusiasm were evident as Friars, Poor Clare Sisters, former and present parishioners, shared memories, told stories, ate together and celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving. We rejoiced in what it has meant to be part of the Franciscan community.

One of the commitments that our Parish Team sees as very important is the maintenance of a Franciscan ethos in our parish school, St Anthony's. Within our Archdiocese preparation of the children for the sacraments is now the responsibility of the parish rather than the school and the Sacramental Team is finding this a challenge.

Recently the members of the Parish Pastoral Council participated in a day long workshop that looked at: *Our values and what we hold dear; Our dreams for the parish; What do we want to achieve?* and *Actions we will take*. This day provided a foundation for planning for the year.

In the light of the news that Franciscans are withdrawing from the parish at the end of this year we now face an urgent need to put plans in place for 2008 and beyond. While changing times are upon the parish, the preservation and promulgation of a Franciscan identity and tradition remains a key focus of how we seek to shape our future.

St Charles Parish, Mary Immaculate Church Waverley NSW

Following on Waverley's commitment to Lactutus (East Timor), a successful Parish Dinner was held as a fundraiser. The parish school community has been generous and we remember the people of Lactutus each Sunday during the Prayers of the Faithful.

Our parish school has an active relationship with the Catholic school at Bowraville in which many students are Aboriginal. A group of our teachers and students go up there each year. Bowraville is approximately 15 kilometres west of Nambucca Heads on the north coast of New South Wales.

The Parish Council is starting to study the results of the National Church Life Survey in which we took part last year. We're looking at our strengths and weaknesses as revealed in the results. God help us!

St Joseph's Parish Edgecliff NSW

Initiatives from St Joseph's, Edgecliff include those already begun such as working in the parish community and acting locally or those planned for the future and for ongoing attention.

We will be sharing and implementing the commitment made at the August 2006 Franciscan Parishes Gathering through more social interaction with the community and by assisting the aged.

A major issue which needs to be addressed by the parish is fundraising to implement the necessary upgrades at Albert Court Hostel, which is adjacent to the church. An appeal was launched recently to raise funds for this project.

On Tuesday mornings, a number of parishioners are rostered to conduct a service of Scripture readings with Holy Communion in the parish church, in place of the celebration of Mass.

Franciscan parishes are called to be signs of God's love for all, following the example of Jesus and reflecting the charism of Francis and Clare of Assisi.

FRANCISCAN VISION FOR PARISH MINISTRY

St Francis Xavier and St Clare Parishes Box Hill and Box Hill North VIC

Since the parish gathering last year we have begun a few new initiatives. We started by publishing in our newsletter each attendee's personal report on the Franciscan Parish Gathering, including our hopes and dreams for the community. Our parishes recommitted themselves to the implementing of the Franciscan Vision for Parish Ministry.

We undertook to spread the message and share the spirituality of Francis and Clare.

Last year we celebrated the Transitus and Feast of St Francis in our parishes and school. We hosted Peter Kearney's performance on the life of St Francis during Advent. We prayed for the various Franciscan parishes and ministries in Australia and for East Timor in our intercessions, which helped the community to understand the international presence of the friars.

There is a column "Franciscan Focus" in the parish newsletter each week. We focused on gift and simplicity during Advent last year.

This year we are hoping to spend more time reflecting on climate change. Our Lenten focus was on environment, creation, simplicity and sustainability. We hope to pursue further information and make efforts at a local level in regard to climate change, using JPIC resources and Franciscan Spirituality.

We developed a new Mission Statement which is read after the dismissal at Sunday masses. We are making concerted efforts to say "thank you" to our volunteers. We have produced a welcoming kit for new parishioners and welcomed the Indian community with a curry night which was very successful. During the last few weeks we have been giving a lot of attention to our RCIA programme, preparing to baptise and welcome during the Easter Vigil.

These are only some of our efforts to build up our community. There are many other ongoing services and celebrations in our parish life. The parish gathering has given the staff, PPC members and friars a renewed enthusiasm for parish life.



Peter Kearney sings about St Francis

East Timor Partnerships

The Parish Committee wishes to express a debt of gratitude to all the parishes who have been so generously raising funds for their partner parishes in East Timor. Your generosity is certainly making a difference in these places and in the daily lives of the people. Arrangements are being made for a visit from the Australian Province to East Timor to be able to bring you more first hand detailed information of the development of the projects that you are supporting. We hope to have more information and some pictures in the next *Parish Update*.