

# Parish Update

Franciscan  
Parish  
Committee

## October 2007

### Dear Parishioners

The Franciscan Parish Committee held its last meeting on Friday, 24 August 2007, at the Provincial Office, Waverley. It was an opportunity to reflect on the wonderful achievements of all Franciscan Parishes over these many years. We are indeed proud of what each particular parish has accomplished and we wish to record our thanks to all parishioners for their loyalty and contribution to parish life. As a committee we appreciate the support of all parish and staff members in the mutually enriching interaction between the committee and parishes.

The meeting concluded with a special dinner which Father Stephen hosted to thank the members of the Committee for their generous contribution to the life and mission of the Franciscan Parishes.

### Some Highlights from the Report to the Provincial Chapter. "What is going well in this ministry?"

In this ministry, the enthusiasm and commitment of the members of the Parish Committee is reflected in the enthusiasm and commitment of the majority of parishioners in Franciscan Parishes across Australia. There is great diversity in the settings of Franciscan parishes.....

### Franciscan Parish Staff Gathering 2006

One of the major achievements in developing and fostering partnership in parish life since the last Provincial Chapter has been the Franciscan Parish Staff Gathering held at Kensington from 10-13 August 2006.

The theme of the Gathering: *"We Have a Dream.... Challenge to opportunity"* (John 21:4-8) pervaded the whole gathering, both input and process. The 45 participants included Parish Priests, Assistant Priests, Pastoral Associates, Principals, Religious Education Co-ordinators, Parish Secretaries and Chairpersons of Parish Pastoral Councils.

### Franciscan Holy Places Pilgrimage

This Pilgrimage grew out of a request at the Parish Staff Gathering in 2004. The Parish Committee put the recommendation to the Definitory and it became a reality in

2006 and was considered a highly successful venture.

### Partnership with JPIC in East Timor

Partnerships have developed with all Franciscan parishes for either a parish or a specific project in East Timor. The parishioners have been extremely generous in their fundraising efforts. However, we have expressed disappointment at the lack of feedback thus far.

### Volunteering: The Australian Way

We all know how important volunteers are to our parishes and community life. They're the backbone of so many parts of the parish's work having a key role in many parts of the liturgy, outreach and sacramental programs, to name just a few areas. Most parishes though struggle from time to time (or perhaps most of the time!) to keep an active, engaged and renewing group of volunteers. What's the latest research on volunteering in Australia today and how might it



StThérèse of Lisieux Parish Church, Kedron, Brisbane



impact on our thinking about volunteering in our parishes?

In 2006, 5.2 million Australians aged over 18 years participated in voluntary work, contributing an extraordinary 713 million hours to the community. They undertook many different activities and were involved in a whole range of organisations and groups – religious, welfare, environmental, sport, the arts, international aid, emergency support, to name just some of them. Overall, 32% of Australian men and 38% of women were volunteers and a higher proportion of adult Australians volunteer than Americans or Canadians. This significant contribution also doesn't include the many young people under 18 who are volunteering in many places around the country.

Data on volunteering also shows that a greater proportion of Australians are volunteering now than say in 1995, something we may find hard to believe as we perhaps struggle to get more people involved in parish and other community activities. As more volunteers are now in the workforce, and as individuals and families juggle increasingly complex lives, what has also changed is the number of hours each individual is volunteering. In 2006, the annual median number of hours contributed by each individual was 56 hours, compared to 74 hours in 1995. Interestingly younger and older volunteers contribute the largest number of hours.

There are also many new forms of volunteering today, with a significant

number of businesses for example encouraging their staff to be involved in volunteering as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility approach – an acknowledgement of the importance of businesses contributing to their local communities. And whilst many volunteers have been participating for a while, overall 30% of Australia's volunteers have been volunteering for five years or less. So there's replenishment of the volunteer pool.

Research confirms what we know from our own experience - the importance of personal contact - with almost two thirds of those who first became involved in volunteer work either asked to volunteer by someone or did so because they knew someone involved. The main reason people volunteer is because it helps others or the community.

Whilst the above research from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2006 publication *Voluntary Work, Australia* won't automatically prompt more volunteers to come forward in our parishes, it might prompt us to be more optimistic about volunteering possibilities, given that it is such a part of 'the Australian way'. It might also help us to rethink some of our strategies regarding recruitment and sustaining of volunteers.

## A USEFUL RESOURCE

In 1995 the "Franciscan Vision for Parish Ministry" was first published to assist those working in parishes. The document assists Parish Pastoral Councils to align the present directions with the broader Franciscan vision. This document was republished in 2003.

However, the document is timeless. The three key sections are:

1. Gospel Living
2. Life in Community – Partnership with all
3. Service

Embedded in the Vision are the touchstones of Franciscan tradition, reflection and action. These touchstones remain relevant to all involved in parish ministry and therefore connect all involved in parish ministry across the Province.

In concluding this last UPDATE from the present Committee we again thank everyone associated with parish life for their enthusiasm and generosity over the years.

The churches of St Francis Xavier, Box Hill, (right) and St Clare's, Box Hill North (below)

## AROUND THE PARISHES

### Box Hill and Box Hill North

Father Anthoni writes:

- We at Box Hill are conducting a parish survey as a way of enabling us to plan for parish life over the next three – five years.
- We are venturing into a building project for St Francis Xavier primary school that will enable us to organize a new space for a parish centre and the parish hall refurbishment.
- We have just been in contact with the architect to do some refurbishment work on the church; painting, carpet, etc.
- A very good parish celebration for Father Bob Matthews's 50<sup>th</sup> ordination anniversary with his family and parishioners.
- A formation day was organized for those in ministry to the sick, lectors and extraordinary ministers.

### Deeragun

The Parish Pastoral Council at Deeragun has developed a sub committee structure which they have used very successfully for the past couple of years. These sub committees deal with the nitty gritty that does not require the efforts of all the PPC. One of the real gains has been the way in which there has been engagement of the wider parish community. However, they would also acknowledge that this is an ongoing challenge.

The Sub Committees:

- A) **Liturgy**  
Has engaged members of the wider community
- B) **Evangelisation**
- C) **Formation of Children**  
Children's liturgy is successful Sacramental program is moving towards greater parish ownership
- D) **Community Development**  
Quarterly newsletter "The Open Door" tried to focus on Franciscan Spirituality



Youth Masses

Community Masses in beach areas will be a future focus

Future directions – connecting to parents of school children

E) **Social Justice**

East Timor partnership

F) **Youth**

WYD will be a focus.

The Parish was involved with WYD Cross and Icon – farewell to Townsville

G) **Maintenance**

New meeting room and maintenance

### Waverley

Redevelopment of St Charles' School is a major undertaking and for the duration of this work being carried out you will notice demountable classrooms on the lawn beside the church!

CAFÉ program has begun with Gabrielle and Barry Blake and a small committee.





World Youth Day Cross and Icon at Balgal, Deeragun on Sunday, 16th September 2007 and (below) John Pickering ofm concelebrating mass with friars Paul Smith, Peter McGrath and Barry Kirby



The school prepares children for the sacraments and this involves the parents.

Leases have been signed to redevelop Loreto Nursing Home.

World Youth Day in Sydney could be a further inspiration for the young people in the parish.

## Catholic Parish of the West Tamar

Every Sunday a number of special Ministers of the Eucharist take communion to people in their homes who are not well enough to go to Mass.

Father Stephen Bliss OFM, Provincial Minister said that they hoped to have a Friar available for the parish for 2008. Negotiations were still underway.

That will be great news for parishioners!

## World Youth Day 2008

The Province has employed two people to co ordinate World Youth Day activities on its behalf. Ben Galea in Sydney and Caitlin King in Brisbane.

## 40th Anniversary of Ordination

On 22 July Friar John Pickering celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his Ordination with a special Eucharist in the Church of St Therese in West Wollongong. Bishop Peter Ingham presided and preached at the liturgy and several Friars and other priests concelebrated. The church was packed to capacity and included members of John's family, special friends and numerous people to whom John ministers- the Spanish speaking community, the hearing impaired and people with physical disabilities. All of these took part in the liturgy which was celebrated in Spanish, English and Auslan.

At the conclusion of the ceremony a meal was shared in the church hall by all who attended. The Spanish speaking community provided wonderful entertainment which added to the joyfulness of the occasion.

During his forty years of priesthood John has ministered in many areas of the apostolate-education, the hearing impaired, physically disabled people, the Spanish speaking community and the aboriginal people. This diversity reflects John's passionate belief that the Church must be a community which embraces all people and in which everyone feels included. Congratulations John on a wonderful ministry of 40 years.

### Franciscan Calendar 2008 "Creation is God's Gift to Us"

The 2008 Franciscan Calendar features a series of beautiful illustrations by the artist Piero Casentini (Assisi) to complement "The Canticle of Brother Sun" composed by St Francis of Assisi. Each month focuses on an inspirational verse of the Canticle.

- Church feasts
- Franciscan feasts
- Public holidays
- School holidays
- Phases of the moon
- Daylight saving dates

For you or for your friends: a Christmas gift that will last all year. **Available now.**  
Only \$5.00 each, including postage.



Calendar Orders  
Franciscan Provincial Office  
47 Victoria Street  
Waverley NSW 2024  
Tel (02) 9369 9300

(Cheques payable to: Franciscan Friars)

