



April 2025 Parish Report

It stands to reason that the largest liturgical feast in our calendar – Easter – would dominate our April activities. Spiritual preparation saw people take the opportunity for Reconciliation, with two different types being on offer. Fr John attended the annual Chrism Mass at the Cathedral, along with most priests of the Archdiocese and the Archbishop to bless the oils that are going to be used in the sacraments in the year ahead, that is the:

1. oil of catechumens, used in pre-Baptism ritual;
2. oil of the infirm, used in the Anointing of the Sick;
3. oil of holy chrism, used in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders – although we don't have much call for the latter in our parish!

These oils come back to the parish and the oils of the past year are emptied out, while the fresh oils with additional scents are prepared for the year ahead. This Mass also commemorates the institution of ministerial priesthood, though the laity are encouraged to attend as a symbol of the unity as the people of God.

Our churches were packed for each of the days of the Triduum and Easter Sunday services. The prayers, music, rituals and volunteers once again ensured rich, spiritually fulfilling, solemn and joyous celebrations. To continue celebrations, there was substantial after-Mass hospitality at the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday services. Large groups of people, both parishioners and visitors remained behind to mingle, chat, eat and drink. One visiting Columbian family said it as their first time at our Parish vigil and they loved it so much that next year they wish to return and volunteer in some way. New people, who have not volunteered previously, stepped forward to assist this year, as well as our usual generous-hearted crop of volunteers.



About 90 people turned up, with the sunshine, for a wonderful ecumenical Good Friday service of lament and hope, led by First Nations Archdeacon, Rev Uncle Glen and supported by Fr John, Revs. Alex, John and Katherine of the Uniting and Anglican churches respectively. Rev Uncle Glen spoke the Acknowledgment of Country and lit the fire for the Smoking ceremony. Rev Alex told the Jesus story of this day; Fr John and Rev Katherine did the acclamations, peace prayers and 'call to worship', while Rev John led us in an acclamation of faith. Rev Uncle Glen spoke of

the need to lament and rise out of the darkness. He then invited all to participate in a water ritual and have an ochre dot placed on our foreheads. Our parish provided morning tea, which was most popular as we managed to go through 140 hot cross buns, leaving only one and a half packets behind. It was spiritually inspiring and there was a wonderful sense of unity participating in this Good Friday morning service.



Once again, our parish and school participated in the local ANZAC Day service on the Elwood foreshore, in partnership with the Elwood Sailing club and Friends of the Former Elwood RSL (FERSL). Despite it being a long weekend, there was a decent turnout. This year the committee decided to reinstate the breakfast, after this practice disappeared during the COVID lockdowns. Appropriately a diggers' breakfast was served – basically soup in a cup, with an added sausage in bread, and many took advantage of this. We were blessed with sunshine, given a forecast of rain, which came much, much later, after the ceremony was over. The convenor of FERSL stated that it is always good to have a local service, not only for those who cannot make the Dawn Service but also to hear of local people's ancestors who had a story to tell. It also brings greater connection in the local community as noticeably people are engaging with one another over the stories, and engaging with the school captains about their speeches on 'The Meaning of ANZAC Day' to them.

School and Parish Confirmation sacramental program got underway this month, and at the Confirmation Family Evening, we completed the trinity by having Hang Vo, CEO of Sacred Heart Mission speak to the families on our theme: 'Being a Bearer of Light in the World'. Hang spoke of where she has found hope, been inspired by hope, and provided hope, both in her personal life as a refugee to this country and in her professional life through the various organisations, not least, through the work of Sacred Heart Mission, specifically the EAGLE group (Executive Advisory Group on Lived Experience), this is a group who have a lived or living experience of accessing services of Sacred Heart Mission. They contribute their wisdom, commitment and determination to make services and systems better for others. In this way, this group is a bearer of light to SHM's in pointing to paths of responding even more respectfully and relevantly to need.

Our parish participates in the Multi-Faith Network (MFN) in the City of Port Phillip. This month we were hosted by Temple Beth Israel, which included a tour of the Synagogue. Early in the month, we were also invited into Addas Israel Synagogue in Ripponlea. While not running as a Synagogue because of damage caused by the fire bombing, and associated trauma felt by many, as a sign of hope and resilience against hatred, they continue the work of making 'Matzah' (unleavened flat bread) from this venue. The MFN are keen to promote social cohesion activities among our various denominations/groups where we can learn, listen and reflect from one another in a safe, welcoming and inclusive space. Temple Beth Israel are hosting a series of 'Break Bread Kabbalat Shabbat' evenings, and have invited a number interfaith and cultural leaders, and community members, including ourselves, to share traditions, foster meaningful connections, and strengthen our communities. Every group represented were asked to share an event/ritual with members of the multi-faith communities. We spoke of our Pilgrimage Year of Hope and our planned pilgrimage walk later in the year, still in its planning stage, and many were keen to join us. We are always looking to foster meaningful connections and strengthen our communities, both within and outside the doors of our churches and this would be one great way to do it.

April continued to be filled with our staple baptisms and baptism preparations evenings, funerals, memorials, pastoral care visits, and committee and faith formation group meetings. All staff and Fr John managed to take a little time off immediately after Easter, and return feeling refreshed.