



## June Parish Report 2023 for the PLDT

School and parish signed off on our Confirmation program with Bishop Tony Ireland conferring Confirmation on Thursday, 1 June to twenty-seven children from St Columba and other schools. It was a lovely, exciting and reverent ceremony with the students quite at ease with Bishop Tony. Before the term's end, teachers and parish catechist came together to begin the preparations for next term's sacramental program – First Eucharist.

We met with Bishop Tony a week later when parishes in the Southern Region came together for the second in a series of three meetings as part of the 'Take the Way of the Gospel' meetings. The Vicar-General spoke stating that the Archdiocese has moved away from timelines and come to the realisation that the process of Mission has to evolve over time, requiring a more organic approach involving exploration, dialogue and listening as much as is necessary. This session was a vast improvement on the first session as the questions were more focused. We were seated with our potential Mission partners, in our case, Our Lady of Mount Carmel (Middle Park) and St Joseph (Port Melbourne). For the first time we met two of their parishioners, introducing ourselves but only had time for brief exchanges. Curiously, there wasn't much time allocated for cross-chat with potential partners. Instead, we were asked to consider questions in our own parish, such as challenges, opportunities, anxieties and foundations in potential Mission partnerships.

Following on from this gathering, the Discernment Group met with Fr Paul from Mt Carmel and St Joseph. Fr Paul has been kept informed of the Discernment Group's approach and has gently been introducing to his parish the concept of a potential union between us and them. He has called a parish meeting for the end of July, where two members of the Discernment Group will make a presentation. Once this has taken place, next steps will be formulated.

We were thrilled to see some members of our newest community, the Brazilians take up the invitation to do formation as Ministers of the Word. It has been a rich liturgical and fun learning experience in a supportive environment. Other new people have also come forward to volunteer to do other ministry roles and are undertaking training. These are indicators of feeling welcome and the cultivation of a sense of belonging.

We paid homage to our feast days, which fall a week apart in June. Parishioners and parents, along with special guest Hang Vo, CEO from Sacred Heart Mission celebrated Mass with St Columba school. It also gave us all the opportunity to also celebrate the 105<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St Columba School. A week later, the Mission invited all to join them at Sacred Heart for a celebratory service and morning tea. Our two churches are joined as one in the Spirit of St Columba whose life and work flowed into the Sacred Heart of Jesus in service of God's people. We continue this today.

Masses, Baptisms, weddings, funerals, meetings, pastoral care plus involvement with Strategic Planning for the Sacred Heart Mission kept Fr John busy throughout the month.

While our office manager, Jane took some time off and our Pastoral Ministry Leader, Christine was laid low by a non-Covid virus, the Parish continued to be a hive of activity. The Parish House hummed with the meetings of various parish groups, RCIA faith formation group, St Vincent de Paul and Jesuit Spirituality group, the Legion of Mary, our ecumenical networking group and school planning groups. Our Legion of Mary and other community visitors, Bereavement Group and pastoral care continue to be part of our parish outreach.

In an act of greater outreach, at the end of the month, we farewelled three parishioners as they left our shores to be signs of God's love and service in the developing world. We continue to support them how we can and hold them in prayer.

Whether in the parish, our wider community or over the waters, the work of our parish is continually dedicated in service to all those in need.