

Parish Report

Fr Wayne Bendotti – Parish Priest

Good evening everyone, and thank you for the opportunity to share with you this Parish Report.

As 2022 draws to a close, I'm sure some of you are asking yourselves what I've been thinking a lot lately – where has the year gone? I know we say it every year, but this year really does seem to have flown by.

Looking through my diary, however, it has again been a very full year. Rather than verbally summarise all the activities and events of the past year, these are listed on the back of the printed version of this Report.

2022 has been a bit of an “*up and down*” year. While we avoided any COVID lockdowns this year, a period of re-introduced capacity restrictions meant that St Louis' Church in Boyanup couldn't be used for Sunday Mass for 4 months earlier in the year – including Holy Week and Easter. Apart from this disruption we have otherwise been able to return to some sense of routine as a parish.

In contrast with the incredible vitality and growth present here at our Parish School, our Parish itself is struggling at present. Weekend Mass attendance has declined in recent years and is well below its pre-2020 lockdown equivalent. Combined with a gradual decline over the longer term, the result is that it's now about half what it was when I first moved here nearly 7 years ago.

Having said that, we are very blessed to have a handful of very active young families among our “regulars”, who children especially bring much life to our celebrations, and hope for the future.

The challenge with decreasing participation is that it becomes increasingly difficult for a parish to maintain its necessary core functions. This year for the first time, we were unable to convene a Parish Pastoral Council, due to a lack of nominations. Consequently there has been no short or long-term pastoral planning this year, and to an extent, we have just “*drifted*” our way through.

This has several implications for the future ...

- Lack of planning means fewer events and opportunities to grow and deepen our faith and community life – thus we have had no planned social events this year – which tends to further feed the decline.
- Decreasing participation means declining financial contributions to keep the parish afloat, and so this year for the first time we have had to draw on reserve funds to fulfil our financial obligations.
- As our congregation ages, there are fewer people available to serve in the various roles needed for an active parish – e.g. liturgy preparation, bringing Communion to the sick and housebound on weekends, to name just a couple.

Where it is all heading? ... I really don't know. Our world is such a fragile place at the moment and we live in such uncertain time. Our Church is likewise struggling – sadly often because of its own history and from causes of its own making.

However God is still God ... and God has promised to never abandon his people. So we look forward in hope.

I wish to make special mention of Mr Peter Depiazzi, who in March this year retired from serving as an Acolyte - a ministry he had faithfully served in for several decades. Peter's selfless service over many years has been a huge blessing to our Parish and is an example of the kind of dedication upon which true community is built.

In closing, I sincerely thank all the members of our Parish community who have contribute to our ongoing parish life during the past year. I also offer a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has helped to make our Parish School the incredible place that it is: Our Principal – Angela Hegney – and her Leadership Team; All the Staff; The Admin Team; The School Board and P&F; All who maintain our Grounds and buildings; Our Parents ... and of course, the students!

Looking to the future, my hope is that we will be able to find new ways to work together as a united Church community – Parish and School working together to build a stronger future for all.

May God continue to guide, bless and watch over us.

Fr Wayne.

Since Last Year's Annual Community Meeting – A Snapshot ...

December 2021:

- Baptisms: Wells & Marchetti
- OLOL Community Carols & Picnic
- Parish Feast Day: Mass, Morning Tea and Annual Community Meeting
- OLOL Awards & Graduation Night
- Ecumenical Advent Service (Boyanup)
- End of Year Whole School Thanksgiving Mass
- (Family Funeral at Pemberton)
- End of School Year Staff Mass
- Christmas Eve: Outdoor Carols, Mass, Supper at Dardanup
- Christmas Day: LIVE Mass at Boyanup

January:

- Wedding of Nathan Hynes & Laura Posa
- Death of Sr Angela Hynes – Funeral in Perth
- Death of Joe Fiorenza – Funeral (Bunbury Cathedral)
- LIVE Sunday Mass
- (Family Funeral in Manjimup)

February:

- School Welcome Mass & Sacrament Commitment
- First Holy Communion – Start of Preparation Program
- Baptism - Heasman
- School Feast Day – Icy Poles for Kids
- Baptism - Bradley

March:

- Ash Wednesday – the beginning of Lent
- Funeral – Judith Goff (Bunbury)
- First Holy Communion – Family Workshop

April:

- First Holy Communion – Celebration (2 Masses)
- Holy Week & Easter Celebrations
- (Baptism – Mukuka [Fr Abraham from Bunbury])
- Baptisms: Hohnen & Wyatt
- Prayer at 3 ANZAC Services – Fr Wayne
- School ANZAC Service Talk – Priests in War

May:

- School Mother's Day Mass
- Parish Mother's Day Blessing and Morning Tea
- (Family Funeral in Perth)
- Seasonal Workers (Vanuatu) – arrival at Old Convent
- Baptism - Munzer

June:

- Funeral – Neumann
- Our Lady of Mercy College (Australind) Yr 12 Retreat
- Confirmation – Start of Preparation Program
- Baptism – Cross
- St Mary MacKillop Catholic Collect (Busselton) Yr 12 Retreat
- First Reconciliation – Start of Preparation Program
- Funeral – Kay (Donnybrook)

Continuation of Monthly Live-streamed Sunday Mass (Facebook Live):

- Parish Masses in: December (Christmas Day), January, May, July and August
- "Quiet" Masses in: March, April (Easter Sunday) and June

Fr Wayne assisted Bunbury Parish for a few months while they were short of priests:

- Presiding at Sunday evening Mass on 8 weekends; and St Mary MacKillop Feast Day Mass for St Joseph's School.
- Being available for urgent hospital calls and presiding at several Funerals.

July:

- Baptism – Giumelli
- Baptism – Marchetti
- Funeral – Clynick (Busselton)
- Funeral – Bott (Bunbury)
- Confirmation – Parent/Child Workshop

August:

- St Mary MacKillop Feast Day Mass - Josephite Associates (Bunbury)
- Funeral – Bennell (Bunbury)
- Confirmation – Celebration
- First Reconciliation – Parent/Child Workshop
- Funeral – Bowie (Bridgetown)
- Baptism – Hynes
- Baptisms – Damiani & White
- Assumption Mass – Years 4-7
- First Reconciliation – Celebration & Thanksgiving Mass

September:

- Our Lady of Mercy College (Australind) Year 12 Graduation Mass
- Father's Day Mass and Morning Tea
- Baptism – Gray
- Priest's Retreat
- Death and Funeral of my Uncle/Godfather – Tony Scaffidi
- Annual Leave

October:

- Annual Leave (continued)

November:

- All Souls Day – Pioneer Cemetery Mass
- "All-Sacrament Thanksgiving Mass" (outdoors) and Sausage Sizzle
- Baptism – Gammon
- Fr Wayne Presided at the Wedding of his Nephew/Godson and his fiancée in Perth ☺
- Kindy Orientation
- This Meeting !!!

Still to Come ...

- Beginning of Advent – this weekend
- Funeral – Casotti (Perth – 30 Nov)
- OLOL Community Carols & Picnic (2 Dec)
- Parish Feast Day: Mass, Morning Tea and Annual Community Meeting (4 Dec)
- Awards & Graduation Night (6 Dec)
- End of Year Whole School Thanksgiving Mass (9 Dec)
- Wedding (Giles/Smith) – Dardanup (9 Dec)
- End of School Year Staff Mass (15 Dec)
- CHRISTMAS!