



ST PATRICK'S PARISH  
MORTLAKE



Parish Newsletter Winter 2019

Telephone: (02) 97431017

Email: [parish@stpatsmortlake.org.au](mailto:parish@stpatsmortlake.org.au)

[www.stpatsmortlake.org.au](http://www.stpatsmortlake.org.au)

## Greetings from Fr John

In his letter "Gaudete Exsultate", Pope Francis wrote; "Nothing can destroy the supernatural joy that adapts and changes, but always endures."

Our parish of St Patrick's Mortlake is undergoing, with joy, certain adaptations and changes. The Archbishop has appointed Father Tom Stevens to replace me as Parish Priest of St Patrick's from the beginning of August 2019. I moved into St Patrick's Parish as a co-pastor with Fr Barry Collins in 1983. The greatly loved Fr Eris Tierney had decided to move to another parish and adaptations and changes needed to be embraced by St Patrick's Parish. Since then two other respected priests grasped the helm here at St Patricks. I'm referring to Fr Grove Johnston and the lovable Fr Peter Morrissey. It was an honour for me to have served alongside all of those priests.

Adaptation and change are challenges that we all embrace from time to time. Most importantly, as Pope Francis says, we need to understand that "nothing can destroy the supernatural joy that adapts and changes, but always endures".

As I move onto "lesser duties" I need to express my great gratitude to everyone who has made my role at St Patrick's Parish a "supernatural joy". I wish to thank the hundreds, if not thousands, of families and individuals who have invited me into their lives. For me it has been an honour to be with so many people at times of happiness and at times of sadness. I have been overjoyed to witness hundreds of marriages; to baptise so many babies; to welcome people into the church; and to stand with so many families in times of joy, worry, sadness and loss.

My special thanks are extended to the hundreds of friends who have served as members on our various ministries and committees. All of you have made St Patrick's Parish a vibrant and caring community. Thank you!

To move onto "lesser duties" simply means that I will be able to help out in various parishes when requested to do so. I will be residing nearby and will look forward to ongoing contact with many of my Mortlake friends. Fr Tom Stevens, as your new pastor, will be a great blessing for St Patrick's Parish. He comes to Mortlake with great faith and hope. I wish him well in this wonderful ministry at St Patrick's Parish Mortlake. Thanks to everyone.

Mons. John Usher PP

## Shalom Dear Father John

As we farewell our Parish Priest Monsignor John Usher many of his friends and St Pat's Parishioners have reflected on his life and his wonderful legacy... Here are some of their reflections:



- ✠ John, we have been blessed to have you as our parish priest. You have provided us with guidance, humility, humour and friendship over the years.
- ✠ For all of the years I have known you, particularly during those as our Parish Priest, you have followed the rule outlined by Jesus, that religious leaders should serve the people and not be served.
- ✠ It was a pleasure to work with you for so long in the Chancery Office. You have taught me much, particularly in the sensitive matters we worked on together where you modelled compassion, integrity and patience.
- ✠ John, you have a healthy respect for good conversation and a good red!

### Acknowledgement of Country

St Patrick's Catholic Parish, Mortlake acknowledges the Wangal clan, one of 29 tribes of the Eora nation and the traditional custodians of this land.

St Patrick's Catholic Parish, Mortlake pays respect to elders past and present and extends this respect to all Aboriginal people living in or visiting the Parish.

✚ In later years as parish priest of Mortlake, you have exercised your pastoral ministry with love, great care and diligence.



✚ The way you ask if there is anything to share at the end of Mass each week engenders a real community spirit — so that there is always something for everyone to celebrate! Especially when your team wins!

✚ You have faithfully served our Parish of St. Patrick's, Mortlake for many, many years, always with an incisive wit, a ready smile and with great compassion for your parishioners.

✚ You have truly made a difference by the hope and encouragement you have always given to so many of us.

✚ John, you are what we call in Oz, a good bloke. You are friendly, on our side, humble, open, wise, and above all balanced. I, among thousands, will be ever grateful for your friendship and kindness.

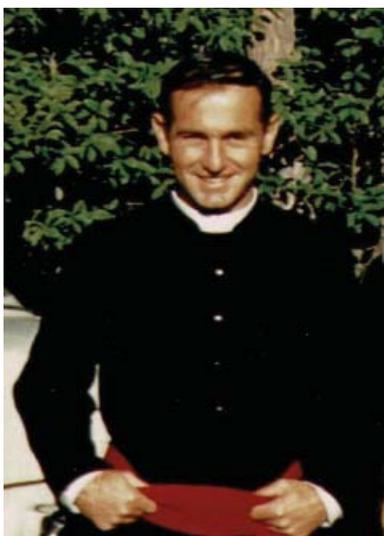
✚ Father John, you always leave us uplifted and hopeful. You are a gifted preacher and an outstanding Priest. We have been inspired by your message of tolerance, inclusiveness, acceptance and forgiveness not to mention your advocacy and respect for the First People of our nation.

✚ We will miss the poetry often a part of your homily, your friendly greetings and jokes as well as the gift of being able to remember our names.

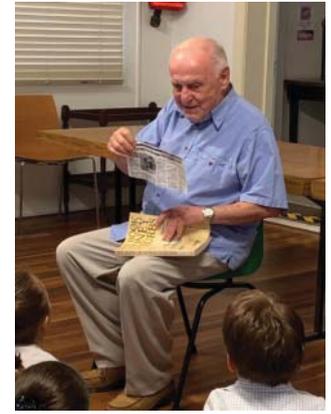
✚ Well — it is not very many that see rightly only with the heart. Monsignor John, you are certainly one of them. How many Clergy, Religious and Lay

People have you assisted, because you have seen with the Heart? I know, because I am just one of them.

✚ The devotion and service you have given to our Parish and the Community over the past 34 years has been outstanding.



✚ Your erudite capacity to provide a scholarly researched context for the Gospel words is unique. Your unwavering message has always been to love Christ, one's fellow neighbour and one's self. Your contributions to social justice have also been remarkable. We shall miss you, John, but wish you a more relaxed life as you continue to serve your priestly mission in other ways.



## Vinnies Winter Appeal

On the weekend of 6-7 July, the Mortlake Conference of the St Vincent de Paul ran the Annual Vinnies Winter Appeal. Volunteers from the Conference spoke the weekend before and asked for financial contributions and donations of sox, gloves and beanies.

A large study of poverty found that there are over 3 million Australians living below the poverty line. St Patrick's Parish Mortlake responded generously, as they always have in the past. The \$3,120.65 donated will support those struggling with Winter, assisting with the increased power and food bills that come with this season.

Baskets at the back of the Church were filled to overflowing after each Mass with sox, gloves and beanies that will be gift wrapped and handed out by the Night Patrol and the Vinnies Brekkie vans. With over 20,000 homeless living in Sydney alone, and over 116,000 in Australia, there will be plenty of people who will be delighted with the gifts.

Thank you, St Patrick's, again for your wonderful kindness. St Vincent de Paul could not support the needy without your ongoing wonderful generosity.

The Census we had in Australia three years ago, revealed that 116,000 people were counted as homeless, with 20,000 of those living in Sydney. Furthermore, in a large study of poverty in Australia last year, it found that there are a little over 3 million people living below the poverty line.



# Parish Dinner 2019

On Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June we gathered once again for our Annual Parish Dinner at Canada Bay Club. Over 200 parishioners and friends attended the dinner which was a special evening for Mons John. Parishioner Mike Bailey was our MC for the evening and was very entertaining.



Some very old friends of Mons. John were invited including Fr John Langtry, Fr Tom Stevens, Mayor Angelo Tsirekas and Burwood Councillor Heather Crichton, Monsig. Vince Redden, Mrs Deidre Grusovin, Fr Gary Rawson, Fr Grahame Malone – Concord Hospital Chaplain, Mandy Westgate, Principal St Patricks Primary School.

Guests from Canberra were Dennis and Margherita Bayada as well as friends from Mons John's early CYO days.

Fr John Langtry shared some stories of their friendship over many years from their time in the seminary to working and holidays together. Monsig. John gave a



wonderful historical presentation on the comparison of our Mortlake surrounds to the Thames in London. He welcomed Fr Tom who said grace and who spoke about



how blessed he felt to be able to return to St Patricks at Mortlake.

Many young parents and teachers from St Patrick's School attended the dinner and the beautiful quilt donated by Stitching Hearts sewing group was won by Natalie Markovic. A very extensive raffle was organised and many thanks go to all the sponsors who are always so generous.



Accordianist Ross Maio entertained the guests with his music and special tribute to the Irish. A delicious meal was enjoyed by all and our thanks go to the staff and management of the Canada Bay Club.

Marie Piccin thanked Mike Bailey, Brenda Johnston, Len and Denise Norman, and the Social Ministry team for their support with the organisation of the very successful event. Anne Manenti was presented with a bouquet of flowers for her efforts in continually

organising a wonderful event over so many years.

A great time was had by all.



## Liturgy Committee

St Patrick's Liturgy Committee are looking to find and train additional acolytes. Acolytes attend to the service of the altar and assist the priest in liturgical celebrations, especially in the celebration of Mass. Acolytes are rostered in advance for the Mass that suits them best.

There are currently 6 acolytes and the Committee would like to increase this number to 9 or 10 to cover the rosters during holidays, periods of sickness or other activities. The rosters are developed in advance to assist with planning. If you would like to learn more about this satisfying vocation please contact Brenda in the Parish Office or Kevin Nelson-Smith on 0490 119 131



## Pastoral Care Ministry

The Pastoral Care Committee provide hospitality, visiting our aging parishioners and taking them Holy Communion and transporting less - mobile parishioners to Mass. They provide companionship, special work and care, ensuring all parishioners feel engaged and included in our parish.

*Jesus, you walked long distances to spread your message of love and peace. Continue to walk by my side as I try to understand your will for me. Amen*



It has been a busy start back to term with lots of different liturgies. We acknowledged Anzac Day on our first morning back, even though some children did lay a wreath for us at a local dawn service and then finished with an Easter Liturgy in the Afternoon.

Father John was there at our lovely Mother's Day liturgy retelling the Gospel story of Mary's visit to Elizabeth in a great way for the children to understand and finished with a great poem about mums. We had a small group sing at Mother's Day Mass on Sunday as well.

We had a camp out at the end of May with our dads supporting the St Vincent de Paul Sleep Out... the children and staff wore their Pjs to school as well... so lots of things to keep raising awareness of the important things in life.

We have had lots of enrolments, with many families from around the area and look forward to having 2 very good — sized Kindergartens next year.

Work is continuing on the empty blocks in Herbert St with people coming in to quote for works to green the area for us, which we will definitely need next year.

Amanda Westgate,  
Principal  
St Patrick's Primary  
School Mortlake

A great night was had on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May, when 35 families (dads and their children) camped out for the first Cooinda (meaning Happy Place) Camp on the Parish Parklands. (formerly known as Father John's Garden!!)

It was a wonderful success. Great fun and memories forever for the children. Kirsty Lucas the school's Family Educator, along with Ashleigh Cameron the Religious Co-ordinator and a great bunch of enthusiastic dads organised a very special occasion. Father John shared in the liturgy that had been organised and the dads joined in a talk about homelessness on our Sydney Streets. Our class on Year 3 and 4 children helped to prepare the food that was shared on the night. A special shout out to the Vinnies Brekkie van that came and fed everyone on the Saturday morning. Everyone is looking forward to 2020, without the surprise water sprinklers at midnight!



## Farewell Esteemed Parishioner: Jack Coulson



Augustus (John) Coulson, Mortlake Milkman

The bright, cheerful greeting of Jack Coulson at the 6pm Sunday St Pat's Mass was what many of us first encountered as we entered the church. Until illness prevented his attendance at Mass, Jack was an important and active member of our parish. We interviewed Jack and his wife, Margaret for the 2018 Autumn Parish newsletter and he was thrilled with this, keeping several copies to share with family and friends. Jack, aged 88, died on June 12, 2019, and his funeral was held at St Pat's on June 20, 2019. Jack was the dearly loved husband of Margaret and father of Mary, Angelo (dec), John, Trish, Bill, Judy and Margie. He was the proud Grandpa to his 10 grandchildren.

Jack will be missed by us all. RIP.