



ST PATRICK'S PARISH  
MORTLAKE



## Fr Tom Stevens - Glenn Campbell was right – I need to ‘Try A Little Kindness’



As we now approach the 2019 Christmas Season we come to that familiar territory of reviewing the year that was, and maybe making a gentle assessment on the ‘State of the Union’ within our communities, families, and importantly, within myself. Such self-assessments are a healthy thing to do, if done in a spirit of forgiveness, honesty and hope.

The tangible aspects of our lives are somewhat easier to review. I may ask myself, this 2019: how have I fared financially; do I still find my job rewarding in giving me a rightful and healthy pride in what I do; etc.

However, the deeper questions I may ask myself over this Christmas Season might be: how healthy are my relationships, and do I work hard enough in seeking to strengthen those relationships where I may be struggling? Do I seek to heal a wound or tension I may have created? What’s my honest disposition to the homeless, the unemployed, the refugee, the addict?

Christmas is the time for Charity and healing. Charity is central to our mission as Christians, and we are called to share it with the world, especially those in need. As Pope Francis has said:

“God spreads you into the world as seeds that sprout on dry land, as a consolation balm for those who are hurt, as a fire of charity to warm up many hearts choked by abandonment and hardened because they are discarded.”

The Christmas story of Jesus coming into the world is always a reminder of Hope always being visible, even in the most desolate of situations (a dirty stable in Bethlehem!). Let’s embrace the 2019 Christmas Season with that Spirit of Hope, knowing that each one of us represent the reality that Christ is present in our world through our acts of charity, love and gentleness to each other and importantly to myself. Go gently.

Fr Tom

## Parish Newsletter Summer 2019

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## Please join us to celebrate Christmas 2019

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December**

6:00pm Vigil - Children’s Christmas Mass

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December**

8:00pm Vigil Mass

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December**

Midnight Mass

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December**

9:00am Mass

10:30am Mass

### 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.

## Audrey Clark

At the 9am Mass on Christmas Day in 2018, longtime parish organist played for our St Pat's Mass for the last time. After Mass, in appreciation of her service to our parish, Audrey was presented with a bouquet of flowers, and her granddaughter spoke on her behalf.



For the past 20 years, she had been the church organist here at Mortlake, playing for Sunday mass, funerals, weddings and other church events. It has been said that to sing is to pray so we are very grateful that for so many years Audrey gave us her generous gift of music to help us pray. She has also been church organist at parishes in Homebush and Strathfield and more lately at St Pat's, when she and Tony moved to Mortlake. Audrey was always assisted by her husband Tony, who put up the numbers of the hymns on the board at the front of the church.

This is an extract of her granddaughter's speech outlining Audrey's career:

'Audrey was a remarkable musician from a very young age. Aged just 13, she entered the open division of the City of Sydney Eisteddfod for Piano.

After finishing school, she was awarded a scholarship to the Sydney Conservatorium of music, aged 16. She excelled as a pianist and was offered a scholarship to study in London, which she declined. She distinguished herself at University and was invited to pursue a career as a concert pianist, but chose instead to become a high school music teacher, and she married my grandfather, Tony.

Nana was also a piano teacher at Santa Sabina College and until recently taught musicianship in her home, assisting HSC students with their studies. Unsurprisingly, she earned a reputation for her students always receiving top grades.

Nana taught her five children to play the piano and appreciate music. Her gift of the love and mastery of music has been passed onto her loving grandchildren, as you have all heard today in the voice of her granddaughter, my sister, Emily'.

We at St Pat's have been so fortunate that Audrey shared her love of music with us for so many years. We have indeed prayed twice and are so very blessed, thank you, Audrey.



**HARDEST HIT  
CHRISTMAS APPEAL  
2019**



The St Vincent de Paul Society members have been busy in the lead up to Christmas. They ran the BBQ for Blessing of the Animals and are ready with the sausages and onions for Carols on the Green. Volunteers joined with the school to make sandwiches for the Night Patrol and members from Vinnies also volunteered at the Sydney Street Feast in November.

St Vincent de Paul Society, with support from St Patricks' School are driving the Hardest Hit Christmas Appeal to assist local families and groups hardest hit by drought and bushfires in NSW. Let your heart guide the way you give. There will be an envelope Christmas Appeal (with tax deduction) and bucket collection at all weekend Masses from 23-24 November. This money will be donated to the Forbes/ Wilcannia SVDP Conference to spend nearby to support local businesses. We are also providing baskets in the Narthex for hamper items and non-perishable foods which will be packaged and sent to local clients with the overflow being sent to assist families doing it tough in western NSW.

It's not too late. Please give generously to spread some Christmas cheer to those in need this Christmas. Christmas cards and calendars are available in the Narthex which will also help families and individuals doing it tough.

## Celebration with Peter Kearney

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November  
6:30pm - 7:30pm**

A wonderful evening concert and reflection was held in the Church on 27<sup>th</sup> November with Peter Kearney. Peter, best known as the composer of 'Fill My House' and 'The Beatitudes' is a popular musician who has performed all around Australia, the United Kingdom and Ireland. The evening was a wonderful celebration of the Advent and Christmas seasons and was thoroughly enjoyed by the large number of attendees.

At the end of the concert most participants adjourned to the Parish Hall for a 'cuppa and suppa' to catch up with Peter and their friends, and share recollections on a lovely occasion.

# Farewell Monsignor John

On Sunday morning 4<sup>th</sup> August a good crowd of our parishioners attended a farewell for our beloved parish priest, Monsignor John Usher. The farewell was held in the grounds of St Patrick's Primary School fittingly outside of 'The John Usher' building. The farewell included tributes to Monsignor John including an acknowledgement of his great contribution to our parish here at St Patrick's and beyond.



Interesting that during his education where he obtained a Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Social Work, he attended St Patrick's College at Strathfield and St Patrick's Seminary at Manly — it seemed therefore that he was destined for St Patrick's at Mortlake. John was appointed to St Patrick's Mortlake in May of 1986 and was made our Parish Priest in October 2003. During that time he was also a director of Centacare from 1983 to 2004 and the Chancellor and Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Sydney for ten years till 2015. Notwithstanding these significant appointments he managed and developed our parish into the wonderful environment it is today. We wonder how he managed all of these duties in addition to the weddings, baptisms funerals, hospital & home visits to the sick and the comfort he gave us when needed. This was as well as the daily Masses and sacraments and other calls on him as required. But whilst Monsignor John has reached the finish line of his priestly duties he is on the starting line of his well-deserved retirement.

To assist him along the way the parishioners provided him with some gifts and mementos including travel and transport vouchers, some 'Usher Scotch' and a wonderful book which documents his time here at St Patrick's with lovely farewell comments from many of the friends he has made here. Thanks to Len Norman for assembling this book. Anne Manenti also gave a short address in Italian.

John Usher has touched the lives of all of us here at St Patrick's Mortlake and we thank him for dedicating his life to our church. We all wish him a wonderful and well-earned retirement and hope that we will continue to see him from time to time.

Thanks to St Pat's Principal, Mandy Westgate for offering the school grounds and to her staff for their assistance on the day. Also thanks to Brenda Johnson and the Social Ministry team for serving the morning tea.



# What's Been Happening in 2019..

## January

- ✚ World Youth Day in Panama. Several parishioners attended.

## March

- ✚ St Patrick's Feast Day celebrations after Sunday Mass, 17 March.
- ✚ Training of readers (2 evening sessions).
- ✚ Mass and anointing of the sick followed by morning tea.
- ✚ Movie: **Padre Pio**.

## April

- ✚ Refreshments provided by The Pastoral Care Ministry after each weekend Mass (6/7 April) and again in November. (16/17).
- ✚ Faith Education with David Patterson, presenter and also in November.
- ✚ Over 100 people volunteered for ministries during Holy Week and Easter and Holy Week and Easter liturgies well attended.

## May

- ✚ Mother's Day Mass. Children from St Pat's were involved.

## June

- ✚ Parish Dinner at Canada Bay Club with 160 guests.
- ✚ First Holy Communion Mass, 31 Communicants.

## July

- ✚ Christmas in July Luncheon at Massey Park.
- ✚ Men's Gathering with Monsignor John.
- ✚ St Vincent de Paul's Winter Appeal.

## August

- ✚ Monsignor John's last Sunday Mass in the parish and farewell morning tea.
- ✚ Welcome to our new Administrator, Father Tom Stevens.
- ✚ Ministry of Compassion workshops conducted in parish.



## September

- ✚ Fathers' Day Mass.
- ✚ Confirmation : 28 young people were confirmed in two ceremonies.

## October

- ✚ Welcome morning tea for Father Tom.
- ✚ Blessing of the Animals.
- ✚ Presentation of plaque and thanks to Otto Petrin, our longtime volunteer parishioner gardener.

## November

- ✚ Parishioners invited to leave the names of their deceased loved ones at the foot of the altar throughout the month of November.
- ✚ Visit from Ephpheta, Catholic Centre of Deaf & Hard of Hearing People.
- ✚ Movie night for youth of the parish.
- ✚ Peter Kearney – reflection and singing in preparation for Advent.
- ✚ Pastoral Care Lunch.
- ✚ Parish and Bingo end of year Christmas Lunch.

## December

- ✚ Carols on the Green.
- ✚ Christmas hamper.

Many thanks to everyone in the Parish who has contributed to this very busy year. It's your parish and the variety of activities, both spiritual and social would not be possible without so much input by so many people. Special thanks also to Monsignor John and Father Tom for leading us.

And finally here are some interesting statistics: This year at St Pat's we celebrated 10 weddings, welcomed 84 people into the Church with the sacrament of Baptism and farewellled 18 of our friends into life everlasting.

# Blessing of the Animals



The very first Blessing of the Animals was celebrated on the Parish Green on Sunday 20 October from 10:30-12:30pm. Dogs, Cats, silkworms and even rats were brought along by their owners to be blessed in a lovely ceremony led by Father Tom, who reminded all present of the importance of pets for their companionship, unconditional love and proven physical, emotional and mental health benefits.

The fair atmosphere was provided by craft and cake stalls, the all — important coffee van and sausage sizzle, an organic produce shop, an essential — oils stand, Men's Shed sales spot and the obligatory raffle. Not only was it such a successful community event that it seems likely to become an annual event, but it also raised substantial funds for Sleeping Ruff — an organisation who supports the homeless who have pets. Thanks go to Fr Tom, Kirsty and her trusty team, SVDP, stall holders and all the parishioners, families and kids who brought along their party spirits and their beloved pets.



# Otto Petrin

The parish of St Pat's has honoured and thanked in a special way Otto Petrin for over 40 years of continual service in his loving care and dedication in maintaining the gardens of the parish.

A sandstone plaque recognising his long service was blessed and unveiled at the 9am Mass on Sunday 13 October, 2029. The plaque will eventually be installed on the exterior of the church, near the sacristy, facing the garden beds where Otto has worked tirelessly over the years.

Thank you Otto!



# Faith Education

The Faith Education Ministry here at Mortlake includes aspects of improving the knowledge of our faith. Under this umbrella includes:

- ✦ Providing Catechetical support to give scripture lessons to the Catholic Children at Mortlake Primary School. We currently have 12 catechists and assistants who service the seven classes at that school.
- ✦ Preparing children with instruction for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. This now includes St Patrick's Primary School at Mortlake which will significantly improve the numbers in coming years.
- ✦ Offering Parishioners with Adult Education opportunities on faith topics. This includes guest speakers, local presentations, films etc with the next presentation being a two part session on the Creed to be presented by a guest speaker in November. We are also looking at an Advent Program and a presentation on Forgiveness and Mercy following Sunday Morning Mass over the next few weeks.
- ✦ RCIA — This is the instruction and welcoming onto our church of adults who want to become a Catholic. It is a structured program of welcome, instruction and friendship prior to the official joining the church which generally occurs at the Vigil Mass at Easter.
- ✦ Baptismal preparation — Preparing families to have their child Baptised — currently managed by Amanda Gierek and Brenda Johnson.

As can be seen it is a comprehensive ministry & we are always looking for new parishioners to become involved one or more of the above callings. For more information contact Bob Mayor on 0418 228689 or email [mayor@leasing.net.au](mailto:mayor@leasing.net.au)

# Sydney Street Feast

On 15<sup>th</sup> November, a group from St Patrick's volunteered at the Sydney Street Feast held on the forecourt of St Mary's Cathedral in the city. It was a wonderful event where the city homeless were treated to a beautiful, sit-down, quality meal and waited on by volunteer waiters just like in a high class restaurant. The impact this service had on each client's self-esteem was amazing and the huge smiles and wonderful thanks provided to the volunteers made it a wonderful experience for all.

This was the second Sydney Street Feast sponsored by the Archdiocese of Sydney in response to the 2018 call by Pope Francis to celebrate an Annual World Day of the Poor.

The success of both days are certain to see this event established as an annual event in the Sydney Catholic Church calendar.

## Vale Margaret Mary Dix

12 March 1954 ~ 5 August 2019



Our dear friend and colleague, and leader of the St Patrick's Communications Ministry, Margaret Dix, died on August 5 2019. Margaret was instrumental in commencing the Team and was a brave, dynamic and inspirational woman. She combined a very efficient, intelligent and pragmatic approach with a wicked sense of humour which made our team a very productive, but fun group.

The beautiful and moving celebration of Margaret's life was concelebrated by Mons John and Fr Tom, and during the homily Mons John spoke about how Margaret gave us so much and how we have much to learn from her.

Margaret's husband, Geoff's eulogy was also very moving in paying tribute to a remarkable woman. He gave us an awe-inspiring description of Margaret as daughter, student, wife, mother, grandmother and friend. He spoke of her courage, the importance of her friends and her commitment to St Pat's.

Margaret lived a very full life completing an adult education degree part-time and a Masters degree. Rather than go onto a PhD, Margaret joined TAFE and rose from a Public Relations and Marketing teacher to Professional Development Manager, a position she found stimulating and challenging and where she

was surrounded by friends from a great staff group, including many brilliant women like herself.

She was also very involved in her children's lives and education and held positions of NSW Children's Playgroup President as well as President of several Parents and Friends Associations.

She gave school key-note addresses, assisted with debating, canteen duty and was even chief cook and clothes washer for the cricket team.

Margaret often spoke of her children with great pride. Over time, Margaret welcomed new friends to the family: Dave with Megan, Amie with Evan, Sophy with Rowan and Jess with Neil. And extra special people came along too. There was Julian and granddaughters Eleanor, Isabelle and Elizabeth. Margaret loved them fiercely with all her heart.

In 2018 she even started a law degree at Notre Dame University. She lived her dream as a 64 year-old surrounded by fellow 19 year-old students, working hard, mentoring with lots of life experience and passing with Distinctions.

And of course, she loved her friends and the community of St Patrick's at Mortlake. As well as being an integral member of the Parish Council and leader of the Communications Team, she was also a valuable acolyte, serving Masses with pastors like Fr Tom and Fr John, whom she admired so much.

The community of St Patrick's at Mortlake are very sad at Margaret's passing and we offer our sympathy to Margaret's family, her husband, Geoff, her children Evan, Neil and Megan, Rowan and Julian, their partners and grandchildren. However, we have wonderful memories and are thankful for Margaret's impact on our parish, for her leadership, her vision, her hard work and her positive influence on our future.



# Parish Youth Group

The Parish Youth Group enjoyed a Pizza and Movie Night on 8<sup>th</sup> November. During the evening, the group also worked on creating some special mugs that will be sold at the Carols on the Green celebration on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December. The money raised will go to the farmers in drought.

If you have children aged 9 to 13 years old who would be interested in our youth group, please contact Erin, our St Patrick's Mortlake Youth Group leader — [erin.white05@gmail.com](mailto:erin.white05@gmail.com).



# Carols on the Green

Bring the kids, picnic blanket and your best singing voice to Carols on the Green on December 13<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. There will be the student's Christmas craft stall for present solutions, and a coffee cart and Vinnies sausage sizzle to save you cooking on the night.

All proceeds will go to a community in western NSW who have been hard hit by the drought.

So come to carols with a cause on the Parish Green and spread the Christmas cheer through Mortlake and across drought ravaged NSW.



# Sacrament of Confirmation

This was celebrated with 27 young candidates and one adult at a special service on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September. We were blessed to have Monsignor John return to Confirm the candidates together with Fr Tom at a wonderful service at St Patrick's.

The candidates who were Confirmed were: Cooper Battiston, Ottavio Locantro, Portia Cashin, Matthew Lopresti, Lachlan Clancy, Massimo Luchini, Luke Craus, Anastasia Macan, Alexander Di Cristo, Lucas Miranda, Jake English, Zachary Nilsson, Sienna Furfaro, Amy O'Donovan, Louis Galvin, Lachlan Richmond, Louis Gangi, Chloe Robertson, Nathaniel Giles, Melina Scarcella, Archie Hall, Matthew Souttis, Cassandra Hanna, Samuel Souttis, Alex Lean, Cosimo Torrieri, Samuel Leon and Luca Triganz.

A special presentation of food, drink & cake was offered following the service by our social committee and this was well received. A note of thanks to our social committee and the catechists who prepared the children to receive the sacrament — specifically Denise Norman, Sinead Kent, Camilla Vozzo and Bob Mayor.





# St Patrick's School

It seems amazing that I'm writing about another year already! It has been a wonderful year full of special moments, farewells and welcomes and very special liturgies, reflecting our Church Seasons, our special families and our community.



The children have all engaged enthusiastically in everything in the school. They have thoroughly enjoyed working with Mathematics this year, which has been a Sydney Catholic Schools initiative, the great variety of sporting programs and our special clubs that run through our lunch break.



We are all looking forward to working with Father Tom next year as we welcome over 60 new children and over 40 new families to our special school and parish community.

Finally we will look forward to sharing carols with the community. We have a school full of beautiful voices. Best wishes for Advent and Christmas

Amanda Westgate  
Principal,  
St Patrick's School Mortlake

# Catholic Centre of the Deaf



The group from Ephpheta, the Catholic Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People visited us at the vigil Mass on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2019. The Mass was interpreted for us and sung in Auslan.

David Parker, who is profoundly deaf, spoke to us in Auslan about the work of this special group in the Sydney Archdiocese, and members of the team interpreted for us.

'The Ephpheta Centre organises Masses which are accessible for the deaf in the dioceses of Sydney and Broken Bay. Their work includes pastoral care, sacramental services, support and advocacy. Visitation is an important part of their work.' <http://www.eppheta.org.au>



Merry Christmas

*The Communication Ministry would like to wish Monsignor John, Fr Tom and all Parishioners a very  
**Happy and Holy Christmas***

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