



ST PATRICK'S PARISH
MORTLAKE



Parish Newsletter Spring 2021

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Message from Fr Tom

Dear St Pat's Parishioners,

In recent times there's been a regular advertisement on TV for one of the big banks, which sees a young girl standing at a window looking out at various people passing by her unit, going about their daily business. The sales pitch of the ad is – *"What is money for, if not for this?"* The campaign is about helping customers refocus on what matters most, and to say that the bank is here to support those aspirations.

COVID has offered us an opportunity to perhaps review our priorities, as individuals, families, a Church and as a society. To see what matters most. I have sought to reflect on our ideologies, especially in these last weeks in watching the tragic events and humanitarian disasters unfold in Afghanistan. The images truly make one cry, as we know the plight of refugees now unable to flee. I have turned my questions though to the issue of what ideology we as Australians have had, and continue to have, on the refugee issue. We (I) have almost become desensitised to the plight of the refugee.

One of the main reasons we (I) may have appeased our concerns on this issue has been our (my) acceptance of the argument that *'we as a nation cannot financially afford to take any more refugees.'* Now offset this against the fact that up until May 2021 the Australian Government has spent \$291 billion on



the COVID response, and I question the argument I have previously accepted. I take this time to examine my own ideologies I bring to the refugee situation especially in this time of crisis in Afghanistan and ask *"What is money for, if not for this?"*

Fr Tom

Parish Information

Parish Office: Fridays only (9am-3pm)

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Important Notice

St Pats will be completely closed during the entire lock down period.

There will be **No Weekday and No Weekend Masses** during the lockdown period. A General Dispensation is granted from attending Sunday Mass.

Fr Tom remains contactable on 9743 1017.

Link to Masses Online:

<https://www.sydneycatholic.org/live-masses/>



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.

mike Bailey

Veteran television and radio presenter Mike Bailey OAM has been fondly remembered for his great human decency, selfless charity work and unfailing commitment to his family and Catholic faith at his Requiem Mass in Mortlake.

Mr Bailey, who worked in the Chancery office for the Archdiocese of Sydney until last year, died on 20th June at the age of 71 after suffering a stroke.

His parish priest, Fr Tom Stevens from St Patrick's Mortlake was principal celebrant at a Requiem Mass for Mr Bailey on 15th July.

"I always loved his sense of humour, his charisma, his passion, his work ethic and his deep love and support for his family."

Alongside Fr Stevens concelebrating the Mass were Auxiliary Bishop Terry Brady, former Vicar General, Monsignor John Usher and Fr John Knight.

In his homily, Fr Stevens paid tribute to Mike's deep practical faith which led him to embrace a life of community service.

"Mike knew through his belief in Christ that in following Him, each one of us is empowered with a potential to help and change others' lives for the better.

"His life was a full one: a life where hope was always present, yet was sadly cut so quickly and without notice", he said.

Fr Stevens reflected upon Mike's remarkable media career which saw him work across three TV networks, including over two decades as a weather presenter on ABC TV. He also served as chairman of his beloved Wests Tigers rugby league club and made an unsuccessful bid to enter federal politics in 2007, contesting the seat of North Sydney for the ALP.

Mike Bailey's long service to the Catholic Church was also recognised when he received a Dempsey Medal in 2018.

An alumni of De La Salle Colleges at Bankstown and



Mike and Helena Bailey



Ashfield, Mike had credited the De La Salle Brothers for instilling in him a deep commitment to social justice and community service.

Mike Bailey's son, Michael, spoke of how his father had been a great inspiration to him in so many ways.

"I always loved his sense of humour, his charisma, his passion, his work ethic and his deep love and support for his family. For many years, he would wake up at 3am to present a breakfast radio program, deliver a lecture in journalism at Macleay College at lunchtime and present the nightly weather on television, all the while caring for Mum, myself and family", he said.



Archbishop Fisher and Mike Bailey.
Photo: Patrick J Lee

The Requiem Mass was held under tight COVID-19 restrictions which only allowed for a maximum of ten members of the congregation.

The Wests Ashfield club is planning a separate memorial to allow more friends and family to pay tribute to Mike Bailey once restrictions on public gatherings are eased.

Mike is survived by his wife Helena, son Michael and stepchildren Ben, Donovan and Arabella.

Permission has been kindly granted by the Catholic Weekly to reproduce this tribute to our much respected parishioner, Mike Bailey, by Michael Kenny, July, 23, 2021.

Parishioners Recently Passed

During these COVID times and long lockdown in 2021, several parishioners have died and as a parish we have not been able to celebrate their lives. We acknowledge them here and offer our prayers and love to their families. May they rest in peace.



Margaret Coulson
9th June 2021



Margaret Hunt
10th June 2021



Mike Bailey
15th July 2021



Francesco (Frank)
Giacomobono
15th July 2021



Giuseppe Alvaro
28th July 2021



Giovanni Cama
20th August 2021



Robert Gonano
29th August 2021

Lock Down and Remote Learning – A Teacher's Experience

You wake up and you don't get ready as you normally would. You turn on your computer and check the first lot of emails, usually from staff, some forwarded from the office account from parents and some from some very keen students.

You send out your morning greeting to students and wait for them to respond and say good morning. It's good to see them responding, but... it's not the same. You have already sent the work for the day and you proceed to check how they are going before you get that opportunity to have a Zoom lesson. Some keen students have already submitted tasks and you can't help but feel frustrated when some students make the same errors, "I will discuss this in our Zoom." Before you know it, you have a list of many things to discuss. It's time for the zoom meeting.

Unfortunately, not everyone can make the Zoom, we understand all families are different and we know everyone is doing their best. The Zoom is a great way to see their smiles and check how they are going with their learning, their family and what they are doing to keep busy at home. It's interaction but... it's not

the same.

You ask them if they have questions, you explain a couple of things, but already, no matter how interactive, excited you get or create colour visuals for them, after 20-30 minutes, you can see some drifting off. Many would know, young children have a very low attention span. By now we would have had many students up and around, working with others, discussing their learning in small groups. You would have played a game that would have involved a lot of movement and laughter, but in this Zoom screen of Brady Bunch squares, it is not the same as the classroom.

Remote learning last year was different, this year it's gone on forever, but we will get through. When we have those precious little ones in our classroom again, will move around, play a variety of learning games, give opportunities for group work and provide learning experiences that is more than just a lesson. Till then, we will keep reminding ourselves and our students, that for now, this is the safest and best way.

Maggie Mattson

What's Been Happening at St Pat's?

Suddenly on Saturday 26th June, 2021, it was announced by the NSW government that all churches were to close from 6pm. Our church has been closed from this time due to the increasing risks associated with the COVID 19 Pandemic and the Delta Variant of the virus.

We may have missed out on lots of our usual planned spiritual and social activities during these weeks of lockdown but our parish community is still very vibrant as you can see in this Spring edition. We have much to be thankful for. So, keep calm and read on.

- ✚ Behind the scenes. Many thanks to Father Tom and all the volunteers who have been quietly and efficiently going about seeing to the concerns of the parish. People are still carrying out jobs, caring for the garden, sweeping up the grounds, putting out the garbage, conducting parish meetings on Zoom etc.
- ✚ Thanks also to the volunteers who decorate the Narthex window and arrange the Altar flowers every month. During the ten weeks of lockdown so far there have been many feast days to celebrate including St Mary of the Cross, Saint Mary MacKillop, the Feast of the Assumption.
- ✚ People are working from home or sadly not working. Parents are supervising online learning. Teachers are working hard to keep the students motivated.
- ✚ Parishioners are keeping busy in many ways: phoning one another to maintain contact, walking with a friend, cooking, gardening etc.
- ✚ We celebrated quietly Ash Barty's win at Wimbledon, the delayed Tokyo Olympics, and

Paralympics, admiring our athletes' humility, generosity and sportsmanship.

- ✚ Father Tom has continued to conduct the Children's Liturgy gospel reading every week on YouTube. It's worth a look.: <https://youtu.be/A5NPtma4iIU>
- ✚ Zoom Gospel Reflections have continued.
- ✚ St Pat's Parish Bake Off has been announced on Facebook so send your photos of your culinary triumphs.

The Communication Ministry hopes you enjoy our Spring 2021 edition of the St Pat's Newsletter and that our parish community keeps well and stays safe. As Father Tom has said: "as we find ourselves in this lockdown period again, let us continue to see the message of hope and strength in God and in community as the pathway forward".

"This last week has been stressful and demanding on many of us. Home schooling, isolation, financial stresses - these are all factors which we may be facing.

In the midst of this we nevertheless need to always know that we are greater than our mere surroundings. We are part of a Community of Faith, Charity and Hope!"

Fr Tom Stevens
(St Patrick's Catholic Church, Mortlake)



Photo: Giovanni Portelli
Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney

Our Communication Wizards

Volunteers of St Pat's Communication Ministry bring their special talents and time to maintain and update our Parish Website, Facebook, and Instagram accounts. This involves adding the Parish Bulletin each week to the Website, uploading news and photos and posting items on social media. This digital communication now includes our fantastic new LED noticeboard which has featured some lovely reassuring messages in these strange times when the church is closed during the pandemic lockdown.

Many thanks to our skilful volunteers, who also are juggling work and family commitments to keep us all informed. We also produce the quarterly Newsletter which we hope you enjoy. This Spring Edition is published at a time when Greater Sydney has been in lockdown down for our longest time yet. We hope you keep well and remain resilient in the face of so many difficulties.

The City of Canada Bay Tree Trail

A Leisurely Walk During 'Lock Down' July 2021

"We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own - indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder".

Wangari Maathai —
2004 Nobel Peace Prize — winning environmentalist.

The City of Canada Bay aims to plant 1,500 new trees every year as a part of the Urban Canopy Program which helps support our community to live in vibrant, resilient places that connect people. Urban canopies keep our streets cooler, are beautiful and add charm to our streets.

Tree Canopy covers about 18% of the City of Canada Bay which include Brush Box and Turpentine, to less common trees like Bunya Pines. Trees look wonderful but they also provide food and habitat for local wildlife and help reduce pollution. Most importantly, they improve air quality by giving us oxygen to breathe and remove the carbon dioxide we produce.

During the COVID lockdown parishioner Maureen Casey and her friend, Marion Ryan took the opportunity to walk locally to view the 39 trees along the 'The City of Canada Bay Tree Trail'.

Each tree is marked with a Tree Tag providing interesting facts. The Tree Tag mentions the botanical name of the tree, its height, its shade in relationship to beach umbrellas, the amount of oxygen produced each year and the amount of carbon absorbed in a year. On the reverse side, each Tag has a message. 'Trees help keep Parramatta River clean'. 'Homes shaded by trees can save over 10% of cooling costs'. 'Trees can increase property value'. 'Trees provide habitat and food for birds, mammals, reptiles and insects' and 'Trees make us feel happier and healthier'.

Commencing on the corner of Gipps Street and Broughton Street on a beautiful sunny July day, Maureen and Marion found the first eleven trees while wandering through Queen Elizabeth Park, and after crossing Crane Street, found the last remaining inner west Turpentine Ironbark Forest trees which are critically endangered.

Greeting them as they continued up Major's Bay Road were Concord's many popular cafes and another 14 trees. "We did enjoy our take away cappuccinos." Turning into Archer, Lancelot and Bray Streets, past Mortlake Public School and into Rickard Street, more trees displayed Tags. Just inside the Mortlake School fence they found the most impressive tree:

The 'Eucalyptus Salinga' (Sydney Blue Gum). It is 35 metres tall, providing shade equivalent to 71 beach umbrellas, produces enough oxygen in one year for 333 people to breathe in one day, and removes enough carbon dioxide in one year to fill 987 rugby balls.

After entering Major's Bay Reserve, they followed the Foreshore Walk around Major's Bay with the Mangrove trees gracing the Parramatta River shoreline. Before ending the very pleasant walk during lockdown in the grounds of the beautiful Dame Eadith Walker Estate, they found the 39th tree.

They then paused to gaze at the peaceful waters of the Parramatta River before exploring the gardens and admiring the historical buildings.

If you have time, why not follow the 'Foreshore Walk' around Yaralla Bay through the Dame Eadith Walker Estate? You can then continue around the back of Concord Hospital, on through Thomas Walker Estate (Rivendell), around Bray Bay, along the Kokoda Track and onto Rhodes Station.

More information can be found at:
<https://collaborate.canadabay.nsw.gov.au/canadabaytreetrail>



It has certainly been a time to view life in all aspects differently and to engage in thankfulness for all we have. We have certainly tried to do this at St Patrick's. Our amazing parents have navigated our student portal and supported their children through this term. There has been great sharing during our Zoom conferences and the children obviously love connecting with each other.

In the background, as different staff members have been locked down in different LGAs, a skeleton staff has supported the students who attend each day. The staff are spending many more hours on screen time, like our whole country, Zooming with families and students, reading and marking digital workbooks and preparing work for the following week.

We feel very fortunate to be able to continue to work, live in a relatively unaffected LGA and care for the children.

There is a beautiful poem by Laura Kelly Fanucci, that ends saying:

When this ends, may we find that we have become more like the people we want to be, we were called to be, we hoped to be and may we stay that way - better for each other because of the worse.

We are truly looking forward to welcoming ALL our community back together.

Mandy Westgate
Principal, St Patrick's School Mortlake



HAPPY BIRTHDAY to GLADYS NORTHEY, parishioner of St Pat's who turned 100 years young on Monday, 16th August! Gladys has been one of St Pat's stalwart parishioners, helping and volunteering in various roles in the parish over the years and an integral part of the Mortlake Women's Tennis group. Thank you for your example of living Christianity in our community.

Love, Prayers and Blessings today and always Gladys.

Congratulations from all of us at St Pat's



<https://youtu.be/kVBaNLsBpNE>

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