

RECTOR'S NEWSLETTER NO 4 FOR 2019

November 2019 to January 2020)

★ Greetings to you all.

★ I hope the long winter has not been too difficult for you and that you have kept relatively
★ free from the various viruses that seemed to have plagued our local area and State over this
★ period. I have survived very well myself and I am loving the superb blossoms and flowers
★ and greenery that are now adorning many of our parks and our gardens. I hope there is a
★ lot more drought-breaking and seasonal rain for our farmers in Gippsland and Australia-
★ wide.

★ The past three months have been very busy ones both for me and many of you in the
★ Parish. Here is a brief run-down of most of the important things that have taken place.

- ★ ● It was great to attend, right at the end of July, a special Latrobe City Brass Band
★ concert and presentation where **George Davis and his daughter Karen Symons** were
★ both presented with the first ever life memberships of the Band for their many years
★ of devoted service to and in the Band. Congratulations!!!
- ★ ● I attended a **full day Planning Process in Sale for the Bishop In Council**, which is an
★ elected advisory group for the Bishop and of which I am a member. It was a
★ worthwhile day of reflection.
- ★ ● **I was elected and installed as a Canon of St Paul's Cathedral Sale** on Thursday 15th
★ August at an Evensong Service in the Cathedral. About 20 parishioners drove up for
★ the occasion which was a
★ great support to me. It
★ was a wonderful service
★ with light refreshments
★ afterwards. In a strictly
★ legal sense, the role of a
★ Canon is to make sure the
★ Cathedral abides by the
★ Diocesan Canons (or
★ Church Laws) as set by
★ Synod, which is the
★ governing body for the
★ Gippsland Diocese. However, the main practical role, in reality, is to be a support to
★ the Cathedral Dean, Susanna Pain, and the Cathedral Chapter (or Parish Council), and
★ to represent the Diocese at important Cathedral occasions.
- ★ ● St Mary's had a wonderful **St Mary's Day Patronal Festival** on Sunday 18th August
★ and our Diocesan Bishop, the Right Reverend Dr Richard Treloar, was our guest
★ Celebrant and Preacher. All enjoyed the Bishop's Sermon and his very open and
★ approachable presence and we eagerly partook of a lovely Parish Luncheon which
★ followed.



- Our **Annual Sunday Focus on Stewardship** followed on Sunday 25th August and there was a good supportive response to my challenging sermon. The Parish does need the ongoing financial support of all of the Parish Community to maintain the regular Ministry and Worship and Pastoral Care of the Parish and to keep on top of the maintenance of the Church and Hall/Office Complex as well as the Rectory and Church grounds.
- Sadly, **my 40-year-old niece Marnie in Perth died** very suddenly which shocked the whole family. I flew over to Perth with my three brothers to attend her funeral. I was the celebrant at her wedding in Perth only about 6 years ago. At the funeral, I gave a very well received short reflection on the issues surrounding her death. Overall, it was a very sad affair.
- A wonderful **Anam Cara Quiet Day** was held at St Mary's on Saturday 14th August, and a good group of St Mary's parishioners attended. Anam Cara is the official Diocesan Spirituality and Prayer Exploration and Growth group. We all enjoyed exploring our "inner spiritual garden". The day was led by Fr Ken Parker using some beautiful embroideries by Ann Greenwood, a well-known local artist. These displayed something of her understanding visually of her own journey and her soul's inner garden.
- A **Parish Working Bee** was held on Saturday 21st September. It was relatively good weather and a lot of gardening was done as well as some cleaning inside the Church and some Office cleaning and sorting. A successful morning's work. Thank you to all who helped.
- On Sunday 6th October we celebrated our **Annual Pet Blessing Sunday**. We had a really well-attended Service and around twelve dogs with their owners, and both dogs and owners behaved themselves! There were no cats present but a few cat photos were also blessed! Cats in cages usually don't appreciate lots of dogs, and I am severely allergic to cat dander anyway. On the same day we also had a **collection for swags for the homeless**. Sadly, the homeless represent far too many in our local community and state. It is a sad reflection on the breakdown of families and the results of family violence and the cancerous blight of drugs and alcohol that destroy so many lives. This collection raised around \$530! Enough to buy around five **"sleeping-bag with tent swags"** to be given out through a caring agency set up for that purpose giving some degree of warmth and shelter to those who sleep out rough. Thank you to all who brought their pets and who gave so generously.
- **Sadly, one of our most loved and long-term resident parishioners, Dick Donchi**, died recently, and his funeral service was held at St Mary's on Monday 7th October. It was standing room only and a lovely meaningful service. He will be greatly missed by his wife Eva and his two daughters and their families and by many in our Church and local community.
- I attended the **Annual Clergy Retreat** for the Diocese held at Pallotti Retreat Centre at Millburn near Warburton in mid-October. The Retreat Leader was excellent. The

weather was cold and wet but the Retreat Centre is warm and in a beautiful forested setting. The rain and mist, I thought, was very serene and atmospheric. It was a worthwhile time of reflection and prayer.

- There were a number of special birthdays over this period including Val Lawrence's **70th Birthday** and we also celebrated the **engagement** of Rae Billing to Max Tressidder. The wedding will be sometime next year at St. Mary's. Congratulations to our **Organist Ruth Vanderzalm** who has achieved **25 years** of playing the organ at St Mary's. This has been and hopefully will continue to be a wonderful and very much appreciated ministry to us.

COMING EVENTS IN THE PARISH FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS

- The **Parish Annual General Meeting** will be held on Sunday 17th November following the **ONE Service for the day at 9am**. The Electoral Roll is now being updated and nominations for the Church Wardens and Parish Council members are now due in and are to be displayed on the Narthex Noticeboard.
- Our Opportunity Shop "**Fossick and Find**" will give its Annual Christmas Dinner thankyou to its many Volunteers at 6pm on Friday 29th November. I want to give a very well-deserved thankyou to our Op Shop Managers, Sandra Wagner and Noel Sutton, and their Assistant Manger Felicity Knight, and a big thankyou to all the volunteers who generously give of their time and commitment to our Op Shop and wider community.

- **CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

1) Sunday 22nd December at 7.30pm the **Annual Carol Service with the Latrobe City Brass Band**. This is a popular and well-attended service and is open to all.

2) **Christmas Eve: Tuesday 24th December**

There is no Crib Service this year due to severely declining numbers in past years. But, the very popular **11.30pm Midnight Mass** will be held as usual and all friends and others are welcome.

3) **On Christmas Day** there is only one service as usual, the **Christmas Day Communion at 9am**

- **On the Sunday after Christmas** there is only **one service at 9am**

- **Our Annual Australia Day Service** will take place on the actual day, Sunday 26th January 2020, at both 8am and 10am with the main focus being at the 10am Service. This Sunday will be a recognition of our wonderful multicultural nation and our beautiful land and we will also give honour to our First Nations Peoples and the tragedy of their treatment since white settlement. Our own Associate Priest and Latrobe Valley Aboriginal Pastor, the Reverend Kathy Dalton, will give the address which may probably be in a slightly different format than usual!
- **A Parish Confirmation Service**, with probably around six confirmees, will be held at some time in the New Year, hopefully before Easter. We are awaiting the actual Confirmation Service date from the Bishop.

Blessings to you all over the coming three months.

May you all have a wonderful Christmas Season with family and friends and a Safe and Happy New Year to you all.

With Christ's Love to you, and health and happiness over the coming year.

Fr David