

Heartbeat

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE FAMILY OF SACRED HEART PARISH

Our Parish Community

Madonna of the Aussie Desert

One of the joys within our Parish, is that our local Aboriginal family, the Wiradjuri people, feel so at home in our church. Over the years, they have come to share many of their funerals along with their Aboriginal Pastor; smoking ceremonies (to cleanse the deceased of any evil spirit), playing the didgeridoo, and singing their much cherished "The Old Rugged Cross", show the inclusiveness of our joint Ceremonies.

As a consequence, and to continue the sense of welcomeness, we have adorned the Church with locally painted Aboriginal native art. The most universal has been the hanging of our latest, mother and child scene, which has been entitled "Madonna of the Aussie Desert".



Now framed in rustic timber by our talented John O'Keeffe, it complements the artistry of the painter Zita Toth of Townsville. Inspired by the Aboriginal Community, Zita has painted a warmly coloured portrait of mothering, which encompasses all families sharing in God's creation. Further, Zita generously gave us her painting when I said it would hang to enhance our House of God.

We are so grateful to Zita for her artistry and generosity... **Fr Kevin**

Christmas is...



Christmas is a gift of love wrapped in human flesh and tied securely with the strong promises of God.

Christmas is angelic music in the form of a carol and oratorio with a celestial descant.

Christmas is "glory to God," "good will to all," and "joy to the world."

Christmas is "peace on earth" for those who accept it and live in unity with God's will.

Christmas is a person on duty tending sheep, or machine, who senses the upward call and stops to worship.

Christmas is a tall green tree which serves as festive altar for any household which discovers the true meaning behind it all.

Christmas is a ringing bell calling a distraught humanity to gladness and hope.

Christmas is a glowing hearth gently placed in the winter of humankind's loneliness.

Christmas is an altar to which all can bring their heartache for comfort, their lostness for guidance, and their failings for forgiveness.

Christmas is the sparkle of anticipation and the steady light of faith in the eyes of a little child as he/ she hears the old, old story.

Christmas is the shining star of hope in the sky of all human kind.

Christmas is more than words can tell, for it is a matter for the heart to receive, believe and understand. (Source Unknown)

from Sr Anne Hagan

Sacred Heart Parish, North Albury, pays respect to the Wiradjuri people, the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather to celebrate our faith and worship God. We acknowledge with respect elders past and present.

The Elinjikkal Family:

in conversation with Nicola Hanzic

To think about India is to bring to mind a country in Asia which, as Father Kevin would put it, is throbbing with life. Well, this interview centres on the Elinjikkal family who migrated here in 2012 from the Kerala State of India which is in the southwest of the country.

Joy Thomas and his family migrated to Australia from India hoping for a better life and better job prospects here. In actual fact he applied to come here as a skilled migrant when he was working in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - his trade is that of a boiler maker and welder. Currently he is working at JC Butko Engineering in Wodonga.

Joy Thomas has a wife, Shiji, and 3 children, Mariya, who is in Year 9 at Xavier College, Martin, who is in Year 3 at St Pats and Gloriya who attends kindergarten at Albury North Public School.

Joy Thomas is the 4th of six children. His wife, Shiji, comes from a family of 4 daughters. Joy Thomas and his wife met and married in a place called Vennoor and, as is the custom, their marriage was arranged for them. The majority of people in Kerala State where the family used to live are Hindus, followed by Christians and Muslims. All cohabit and practice their faith peacefully. In fact, Hindus and Christians occasionally attend each other's services.

To be a Catholic in India is definitely a way of life. I learnt that it is compulsory for all Catholics to attend Mass each week and every child from 6 onwards has to attend Catechism classes on a Sunday between 8am and 12Noon, the latter part of the class is devoted to the Celebration of the Eucharist, which the parents also attend.

The church that the family attended in Vennoor is called St Marys. January is a very special time in all the parishes because this is the time when Mary is celebrated as being the Mother of God. It is a time of festivities and on the Feast Day is an occasion when people, walk to church in procession carrying decorated umbrellas and playing drums and other instruments. The bishop decides where this walk begins. Parishes take turns to host this event but January 2015 is the turn of St Marys, and the Elinjikkal family is returning for this occasion, (as well as to meet up with family and friends.)

With regard to lifestyle I learnt that every state in India is different, having a different language (Malayalam is mainly spoken in Kerala State), and different food and clothing styles. However the cities are similar in that life is hectic.



**Joy Thomas, Shiji, Mariya
at front: Gloriya and Martin**

I suppose one would say this is the essence of India. The cities are full of noise, smells, bikes, buses, cars, honking horns and bustling people either going about their business or just socialising. Life in the cities never stops. Throughout the country, respect is very important in the Indian way of life and the elderly are revered and well looked after. This must be a great comfort to them.

Joy Thomas told me that three national holidays are observed in India: Republic Day, Independence Day and Mahatma Gandhi's birthday. Republic Day falls on 26 January and is a time when the people remember the adoption of the Constitution of India in 1950. Independence Day is observed on 15 August and is a time when the people celebrate India's Independence from the British Empire in 1947. The occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday is celebrated on 2 October.

The biggest and most important festival for the people of Kerala State is Onam. This is celebrated around the world sometime during August or September and can last from 4 to 10 days. What is so special about this festival is that all people can join in because it is beyond the boundaries of religion or caste. In Albury, it is celebrated in St Pat's Hall with much joy and happiness sometime during September.

The Elinjikkal family is settling down into life in Albury. They frequently meet up with friends and Joy Thomas also plays cricket once a week in Alexandra Park. I am sure that he would be a fountain of cricketing information should you have the chance to catch up with him.

It was a privilege being able to meet up with this family who is new to our region and obtain a glimpse into their lives. May they find real peace and happiness in their new home, which is far away from the land of their birth... Nicola

Recent Parish Baptisms include:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Cohen Guthrie | Charli Prendergast |
| Elise Quast | Grace Kirk |
| Jack Dunlop | Cleapatra De Silva |
| Jonathon Gloag | Alira Lancaster |
| John Fifield | Samuel Grigg |
| Jack Maras | Rhiannon Lieschke |
| Aurora Dennis | Lily Schischka |
| Scarlett Glynn | Harry Bourke |
| Eva Glynn | Paislie Riddell |
| George Gitsham | Holly Walsh |



Lily Schischka with Fr Kevin and her parents, Ryan and Bec

Parish Council Report - December 2014

Sacred Heart Parish held a Week of Guided Prayer in October 2014 where nine Parishioners were guided by prayer companions each day for 30 minutes. Since October, we have held one further prayer meeting. Our next meeting will be in February 2015 and everyone is most welcome.

Over the past few months we have organised the asphalt in the driveway, repaired the fences and had the artificial lawn finished at the Presbytery. We have held a few working bees to generally tidy up around the grounds. Thank you to those involved, who have generously donated their time.

We held the Memorial Mass followed by morning tea and a BBQ around the Memorial garden on 2nd November,

which was very well attended. Thank you to those who attended and enjoyed the BBQ morning tea. Memorial plaques are available to purchase through the Presbytery at a cost of \$250. This covers the forging and postage.

On behalf of all Parishioners I would like to acknowledge the most extraordinary contribution Fr Kevin makes to all.

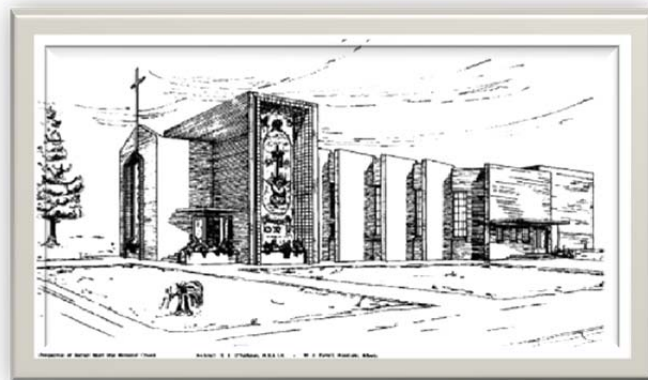
Parish Council members wish everyone a happy and holy Christmas and thank you for your continued support. 2015 will definitely be a year to celebrate our 60th Anniversary as a Parish.

Gemma Whitehead,
President, Sacred Heart Parish Council

Sacred Heart Parish 60th Anniversary 1915-2015

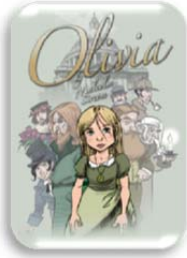
Planning for our 2015 celebrations to mark the 60th anniversary of Sacred Heart Parish, North Albury is well underway, with a range of events including:

1. Weekend of 31st Jan/1st Feb – special acknowledgement at weekend Masses with a banner, new hymn, and choir, followed by BBQ/morning tea after a 9:30am Sunday Mass.
2. Specific focus on the anniversary with speakers during our 2015 Lenten program.
3. Recognition of volunteers during Volunteers week - 11th-17th May 2015.
4. Weekend of June 12-14th 2015, Feast of the Sacred Heart, activities may include:
 - a St Anne’s School Mass on Friday 12th June;
 - Youth Mass at 6pm Saturday 13th June;
 - special Mass celebration on 14th June followed by a Parish Lunch at the Commercial Club;
 - historical booklet launch.
5. Interfaith and ecumenical celebration dates are likely to include:
 - Good Friday Stations of the Cross;
 - a thanksgiving service in May;
 - a celebration around the new ‘Madonna of the Aussie Desert’ indigenous painting.
6. November - remembrance of past parishioners, names on crosses and Remembrance Book display.
7. Opportunity for historic displays, and a memorabilia/evening of reminiscing.



Ideas, feedback and offers of assistance are welcome.

St Anne's



During Term 4 students at St Anne's have been busy rehearsing for their whole school production of **"Olivia"** written by Malcolm Sircom. The story incorporated two well-known stories: **'Oliver'** by Charles Dickens written as a musical with music and lyrics by Lionel Bart; and **'My Fair Lady'** also a musical based on George Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion, with book and lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner and music by Frederick Loewe.

Students spent many weeks learning songs, dance routines, lines from the scripts and developing their characters. The Matinee and evening performances on Wednesday 26th November were a sell out with both audiences thoroughly enjoying the shows. Providing these experiences for our students revealed some hidden talents with many students becoming confident singing solos and choreographing their own dance routines. Below are some pictures of the cast:



Socketober

Socketober is an initiative of Catholic Mission and one way schools can fundraise and engage in advocacy and formation activities for Catholic Mission during World Mission Month in October, or at other times throughout the year.

St Anne's Mission Kids are a group of Year 6 students who, with the help of Mr Lewis, raise money and create awareness of social issues in our local community, our country and throughout the world. In 2014 they held market stalls, selling goods such as stationery, AFL merchandise, clothing and toys and sold Lime Spiders on St Patrick's Day. With help from the rest of Stage 3, they also planned and implemented two outstanding Tabloid Sports days, each raising money for people in need for Catholic Mission and Palliative Care.



Having missed the start of Socketober but wanting to contribute to such a special cause, Saint Anne's Mission Kids kindly donated \$300 raised through their stalls towards Catholic Mission. They have used other money made to purchase more goods to sell at future stalls. Rose and Cailey (Yr 6) were happy to see this donation of \$300 go to Catholic Mission. "It felt good holding all that money but it is even nicer it is going to a great cause."

Saint Anne's Mission Kids coordinator, Chris Lewis, accepted this kind donation and knows it will be put to good use. "We are humbled by the generosity shown by families this year. We never thought we could make so much running a few activities at school. We hope our last stall for the year continues to make a difference, this time for St Vincent De Paul Society, coming up to Christmas."

continued →

Many Yr 5s are eagerly waiting to take over from this great group of Yr 6 students when they graduate in December. The sock-it-to-something concept is an Australian expression that means to fight, punch or strike out at. For example, each year Socktober will sock it to social issues such as poverty, child labour, child trafficking and homelessness.

On Monday 1st December we celebrated our annual Gift Giving Mass. We were overwhelmed by the many groceries and gifts which were donated by our families. These were accepted by Anthony Foley on behalf of the St Vincent de Paul Society. We extend a very heartfelt thank you to all those generous families who made a donation, all of which will be greatly received by those who are in need in our local community.

On Monday 15th December we will celebrate our Year 6 Graduation Mass and Award Ceremony in our School Hall. Please keep these children in your prayers as they say farewell to Primary School and prepare for their Secondary education.

2014 has been another exciting year for us here at St Anne's. We continue to be thankful for the wonderful support we receive from Father Kevin and our Parish Community.

Wishing everyone a very happy and holy Christmas. Warm wishes from the St Anne's School Community.

Xavier High School *from Louise Azzi*



Xavier High School Catholic Studies students in Yr 12 continue to participate in community service at a variety of places around the local area including the Diocesan Primary Schools, Mercy Aged Care, Catherine's Corner, St Vincent de Paul retail store and the Care and Support Centre in Lavington. The students have been involved in a range of experiences which have helped to raise their awareness of the less advantaged in our community and of the value of their participation as volunteers in a range of capacities. Community service forms a valuable part of our Catholic Identity and has been rewarding for all involved.



OUR WEEK OF GUIDED PRAYER

19th - 24th October 2014

reflection from Irene Bowyer



How can I describe what the Week of Guided Prayer meant to me personally, and to the participants in general? It was a week of "taking time out" from our busy lives and, by prayer and meditation, receiving the grace and love that the Lord gives so freely!

At our opening gathering there was a feeling of anticipation, even a certain amount of trepidation. However, in the closing gathering the feeling was of God's love, peace and joy evident in participants. To me, it was a week of seeking and finding a closer connection with the Lord in the readings I was given for reflection. My Prayer Companion gently guided me to find the messages meant for me on my journey throughout the week.

The commitment for the week was to put aside a time for reflection and prayer - not so easy for some of us I would suspect. However, by the end of the week I looked forward to this "quiet time". It was a time to put things aside and "BE" with the Lord. The whole week was like "recharging my batteries" and giving me a clearer way of being open to God's love and grace.

We were asked at our closing gathering how we could share the joy we had found. After much thought, a regular prayer gathering was suggested. As we know, Pope Francis wishes us to share the "joy of the Gospel".

If there is another Week of Guided Prayer in the parish, I am sure that more who participated this time would jump at the chance again.

It was a very rewarding and grace-filled week.

Pilgrims and Prayer Companions at our Week of Guided Prayer follow-up gathering in November



Prayers for the Christmas Season

from Sr Anne

Christmas Eve Prayer

(Frank Borman, Apollo 8 space mission, 1968)

"Give us, O God, the vision which can see Your love in the world in spite of human failure.

Give us the faith to trust Your goodness in spite of our ignorance and weakness.

Give us the knowledge that we may continue to pray with understanding hearts.

And show us what each one of us can do to set forward the coming of the day of universal peace."

Christmas Prayer

(LIVING FAITH, Vol. 4, # 3)

"Meister Eckhart once said: 'What good is it that Christ was born 2,000 years ago if he is not born now in your heart?'

"Lord, we do far too much celebrating your actual coming in our hearts. I believe in God, but do I believe in God-in-me? I believe in God in heaven, but do I believe in God-on-earth? I believe in God out there, but do I believe in God-with-us?

"Lord, be born in my heart. Come alive in me this Christmas! Amen."



Source Unknown

Christmas Blessings

A FEW MOMENTS WITH SANDRA DICK

Karen Purtle

Sandra Dick was raised on a family property in the small settlement of Bidgeemia, which is situated between Rand and Urana. Sandra grew up with four brothers living a very simple and moderate lifestyle. After marrying the boy next door she moved to Albury in 1994. When Sandra first moved to Albury she knew very few people. Her role as Medical Receptionist and CT Nurse at Border Medical Imaging enabled her to settle within the Albury community but after leaving work to have her first child, Sandra felt very isolated until a good friend helped her become part of a local playgroup; she remains friends with many of the mothers today.

Since becoming involved in the local Sacred Heart parish, Sandra has felt a sense of belonging and has met some amazing people within this community. Father Kevin married Sandra and her husband Lloyd and christened both their children, Molly and Laura. The family have become close over the years with Father Kevin, Carmel and Fran. The girls feel extremely comfortable and able to go to Father Kevin for any reason: school assignments, a chat, a laugh here and there. "In our parish, we are lucky to have Father Kevin as he is the perfect role model for unity, compassion and a sense of what is right, not only is he a well-loved priest in the community of Albury but an amazing human being, someone to whom you would like your children to aspire to be like".

After owning a cafe in West Albury for a couple of years, Sandra now runs a home-based catering business as well as working part time as a Clinical Trials Assistant at Border Medical Oncology. She commenced her business catering for funeral wakes from the Sacred Heart Hall with the assistance of Father Kevin's recommendations and still continues

to perform this function when the need arises, and has now branched out to cater for many other functions. After catering for Dot Taylor's 80th birthday party in 2012, Sandra's catering has snowballed within the local parish and community.

Good home cooking and family values stand Sandra in good stead.



To walk into Sandra's home is to step into the magazine pages of Home Beautiful. The garden is creatively landscaped and carefully sculptured. When one opens the door, images of cottage furniture and decor greet the eye. But the pièce de résistance is the smell of a hearty chicken soup simmering on the stove. Sandra has clearly honed her skills –being an extremely busy woman and married to Lloyd, a truck driver

who can be away for weeks at a time. Sandra has encouraged her daughters to get part-time jobs and have a good work ethic. Since 2010, Sandra has been training them to clean the parish hall and they continue to this day, doing it on their own.

Sandra recently took up the collection at Mass. She was encouraged to do so by Michael Regan. At the time, she thought nothing of it. "It's always good to learn new little jobs within the Church. It just encourages my children to become more involved if they see other people they know participating." Since taking up the collection, her daughter, Molly has also performed the task. "It's amazing how many more people you get to know and smile a hello at down the street from just doing one more little task, and it's always great to encourage the younger generation to assist others within the parish." Sandra encourages her girls to fully participate and sees herself and her daughters as well-rounded members of the community.

Your contributions to *Heartbeat* are very welcome. Do you have stories or photos you would like to share with our Parish community, and beyond?

Please email them to:
info@sacredheartnorthalbury.com

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