



# THE GRAPEVINE

*Christmas, a time to rebuild with love and forgiveness.*

## FROM FR STEVEN RIGO OUR PARISH PRIEST

In this, my first Christmas contribution to “The Grapevine” as Parish Priest of Diamond Creek, Greensborough and North Greensborough, I write especially to those whom I may not have met as yet since my appointment in January of this year. It has been a challenging year for all of us, I’m sure, and certainly for those of us involved in developing an effective partnering of our three parishes. I hope that we may meet in the near future and possibly at the Christmas Masses. I have already provided a brief biography of myself in a previous issue and thought I would write briefly about my understanding of the significance of what we celebrate at Christmas.

Have you researched your family tree? I’m sure that those who have find among their ancestors both good and saintly people as well as rogues and villains; quite amazing people we are proud to have connections with as well as those from whom we want to distance ourselves. The latter are those in the family tree who, when we have to admit that they are part of our ancestry, we make excuses like, “well they only married into the family and we aren’t related by blood”.

If you have someone of your grandparents’ or parents’ generation who is still alive and who can

still talk to you about you ancestors, you can still listen to the stories of the lives of their relatives a generation or so beyond themselves. We can, in this way, span personal experiences of even up to five generations that can bring alive stories of our heritage.

My parents and grandparents told me many stories about their own lives as well as stories they knew or had heard about some of their ancestors and there is



exposed a wide variety of characters and fascinating lives. Just some examples: In the early part of last century I have a great, great aunt who was officially beatified by the church in 2006; George Fredrick Handel, the great composer, is one of my ancestors; I have recently found out that I’m connected to Sophia Loren and Carlo Ponti by the marriage of their son to a distant cousin of mine. I

have also however found out about a great, great uncle who spent time in prison and another one who, while he was supposed to be studying Medicine at university in Vienna, squandered the family fortune through gambling at the casino. And I personally know of some extended family who are certainly not nice and wholesome characters, you know, the types you’d like to disown.

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## CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES back page



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In the lead up to Christmas we listen in the Gospel to the family tree of Jesus. There are some rather nasty & dubious characters in his family tree as well, and in writing the gospel, Luke even purposely leaves out some of the really bad ones. We imagine that Jesus' family tree is filled with good and holy people, but it is not. And then there is the birth of Jesus himself; being forced to have the birth take place in an animal's stable, because they were rejected by everyone else; the fact that Mary was pregnant, but not married when she did become pregnant; then having been forced to become asylum seekers from their homeland because the king was out to kill Jesus. And I am sure that as Jesus grew and developed, Mary and Joseph would have visualized the dangerous life that was unfolding for him and they would have been close to despair wishing they could change their son's destiny, but knowing that they could not.

In other words, whatever ways we have sanitized the story of Jesus' Nativity over the centuries and heard it so often that it has become romanticized that even the hay smells sweet in the manger, the reality is that Jesus was born into the mess of human life and relationships not really different from the messiness of our own and into the whole messiness of the ways people behave with one another. And how do you repair a mess – by getting your hands dirty & working on it. Herein lies the point – God, in becoming human makes his home in the messiness of human life to transform it at its roots, to change us and our relationships deep within – God has got his hands dirty.

Later in his ministry, Jesus talks much about the kingdom of God that he has come to establish among and within us and it is about living in intimate relationship with God and in right relationships with one another and about going all the way to prove to us that all life, including our own, is precious in the eyes of God. Coming from the mess of human life, Jesus shows that things don't have to be the way they are, but that our deepest yearnings for us are also God's. This means that there does not have to be war, but that people can live in peace; that there does not have to be poverty, but that the resources of the world can be shared; that there do not have to be people who are excluded and treated inhumanely, but that we can live in solidarity with one another; that people do not have to live in bitter relationships, but that forgiveness and reconciliation are possible. God comes into the world to give us hope that what we

can only see as impossible becomes with God's creative, life-giving power, not only possible, but attainable.

You may say that nothing has changed – that there are still wars and we kill more efficiently than before; there is still injustice and poverty and discrimination and violence, but there are people in little ways who are making a difference; when they stand up and promote justice and peace; when people sacrifice themselves and their careers to help sick, malnourished & impoverished people around the world; when people are angered by the way things are and actively work to change things.

This brings to mind something that will significantly affect us all in the varying ways we have a belonging to the Catholic Church. In the next few weeks the recommendations of the 'Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Sexual Abuse' will be published, and with it, a further public exposure of the ways the Church has failed in its care of those for whom it has been responsible. As a Church we will be humbled and will need to explore ways to make changes to eradicate the systemic failures of the Church to be true to its mission to be the Face of Christ in the world and to express a genuine atonement to those whose lives have been severely wounded. Something that offers me hope and direction in all of this is that in Australia we are working towards a National Synod that will require genuine commitment by the hierarchy to involve the people of the Church. It will require a rejection of the monarchical model of decision making. Such a synod could be the beginning of real collaboration and co-responsibility in the Church with a proper respect for the sense of faith of all the faithful. I look forward to opportunities to engage you for your contribution to have a say in the ways you understand the Church and what you want to see changed in its life. These are the activities of the Spirit of Jesus who operates in the hearts of people who may not even know that it is God who works through them. The world has changed because of Christmas.

Are we open to be changed so that Christ may be born in us and that he may further his kingdom through our hands and hearts? Christmas is the gift of God himself in Jesus in pure love for us, so that we might be empowered to love others in the way he loves us. May Christ be born in you and in your relationships with your family and friends.

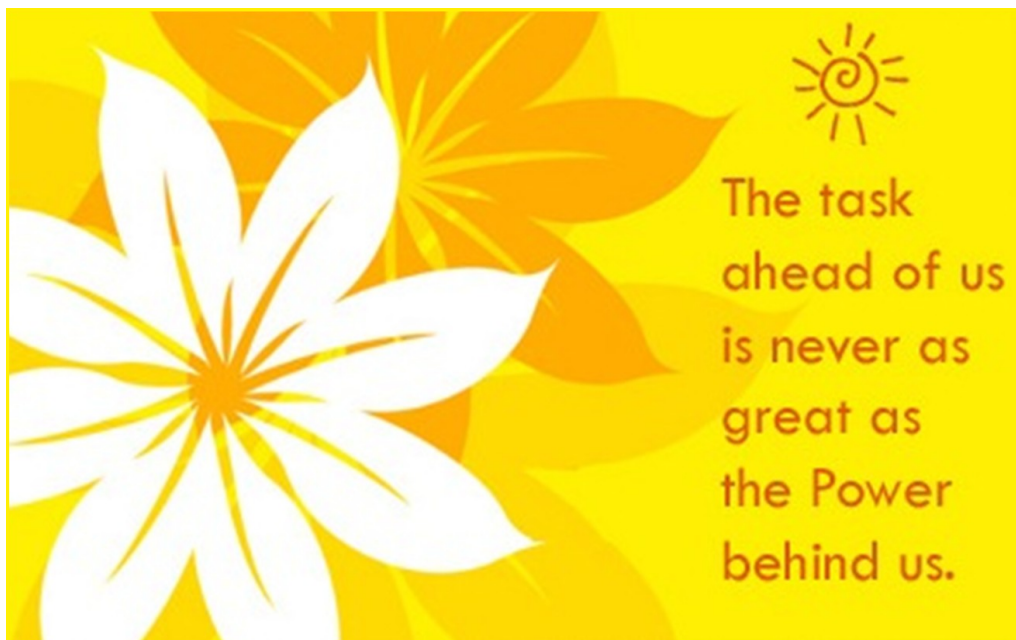
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With this Christmas issue of the “The Grapevine” in St. Thomas Parish, as we approach the end of 2017, I would like to express my gratitude and my well-wishes to you, all the parishioners of Diamond Creek, Greensborough and North Greensborough. Particularly, I would like to publicly express my gratitude to all those in our parishes with whom I work closely: our assistant priests: Dong Tran and Tao Pham; our locally resident retired priest, Owen Doyle; Jacinta Bright, our pastoral associate; Christina O’Connor and Margaret Sapsford, our pastoral workers; the parish secretaries who are the immediate face and voice of the parish office and who especially assist me in my administrative responsibilities: Pat Guatta, Frances Olofsson, Sharon Prosser, Mary Gargan, and Lisa Leahy; our school principals: Jim O’Sullivan, Helen Anderson and Gail Smith; because it is together that we lead the parish in pastoral care, education and spiritual formation. I would especially like to express gratitude for the fine leadership of Gail Smith in her role as principal of St. Thomas school and wish her well as she embarks on a new direction in life with her retirement from that role.

We are also reliant on and grateful for the many groups and committees with whom we work collaboratively, particularly the Parish Pastoral Councils and the School Advisory Boards and Finance Committees. In general I would like to thank everyone’s involvement in the life of our parishes, especially in what has been a very full 2017. Your contribution and participation is what continues to give these communities great spirit and energy. May we continue to grow and develop in the year ahead as we explore ways in which our three parishes work together in partnership.

I pray that each of you in the parish may experience the joy and peace of the God who makes his home among us in a particular way again this Christmas. May God guard you and keep you safe these holidays that you may be revitalized for a blessed New Year.



- DON'TS**
- Don't let your worries get the better of you; remember Moses started out as a basket case.
  - Don't put a question mark where God put a full stop.
  - In prayer: Don't give God instructions, just report for duty.
  - Don't wait for the storm to pass, learn to dance in the rain.
  - Don't put the key to your happiness in someone else's pocket.
  - Don't make God your co-pilot, swap seats.

Advent begins Year B and the Gospel of Mark, so to prepare come and

**Meet Mark, his Gospel & his Jesus**

3 Monday evenings: 27 Nov, 4 & 11 Dec. 7.30 - 9.30pm

St Mary's Church Gathering Space, Grimshaw St., Greensborough.

Donation only. Further information: Sandra Bishop 9434 7553.

This course is offered by the Catholic School of Evangelisation.

## TAO'S JOURNEY

## Episode 10

### A Special Christmas Gift From a Kind and Generous Lady

For many countries Christmas is a time to reunite family members. Most members of families celebrate Christmas and have parties at home. I think there are not many patients who have celebrated 2 consecutive Christmases in the same hospital like me.

I was hospitalised in St Vincent's hospital, in Melbourne from 4th March 2011 to 3rd April 2013. I have experienced Christmas Day alone in bed in hospital. It was so sad. Those Christmas Days were a terrible time for me. I felt very sad as I watched other patients receive a lot of Christmas presents and visits from their families and friends.

Lying down in bed in the hospital, I recalled the lovely time when I was in Vietnam. Christmas time was very interesting because I would go out to the parishes to help the choirs practise Christmas Carols, and play the organ and sing at the Vigil Mass and Christmas Day Masses.

During my stay in hospital, I would have many visitors come to see me, however, one week before Christmas Day not many people came to see me. Everyday from early morning to the end of the day, I waited and waited for someone to come and see me. However, the closer to Christmas the less visitors came to see me. I understood visitors could not come to see me because they were all busy shopping and preparing for Christmas parties with their families, relatives and friends.

One of the few people who visited me was Elizabeth Overdyk, a parishioner from St Michael's parish in Berwick. Liz often came to visit me in the hospital because we knew each other well when I came to live with Fr. Peter Slater at St Michael's parish in 2008. When I was there, Liz was working and helping the school children with liturgy.

In 2012, when I was in St Vincent's hospital, Liz was studying Theology part time at Catholic Theological College in Melbourne. She was training to become a Pastoral Associate for St Michael's parish. At least once a week she came to visit me at the hospital. After the visit she went back to Berwick to report to the Vicar General about my state of health because I was then a seminarian belonging to the Diocese of Sale.

When Liz came to visit me 3 days before Christmas I was sharing a room with 3 other

patients. Liz sat down beside my bed to chat with me. She asked, "Are you homesick?" I answered, "I miss my brothers and sisters and my nieces, nephews and my relatives and my homeland in Vietnam so much. However, I have no chance to go back to see them because I cannot move." I also told her the story about devils attacking me and how I was strongly tempted by demons. They had invited me to commit suicide many times. Their sweet voices were at my ears all the time.

While we were chatting, many visitors brought many different Christmas gifts to the other patients. For me, I received nothing. Liz witnessed this, and she could see the sadness in my eyes and then she asked me, "What kind of Christmas gifts do you want? Do you need some money to celebrate a Christmas party here? Do you want a Christmas cake? Please tell me whatever you want and I will bring it to you next time." I replied, "A patient who is dying like me, does not need much money, gifts, food, drink or other materials. I do not know when I will die. The things I need now are: compassion, love, sharing, understanding, prayers and especially your presence with me here. Everyday I am waiting for someone to come to see me, to talk with me, to share with me about my sufferings and pray for me to get better or to pass away in peace."

Liz told me before saying good bye, "I will come down to Melbourne the day before Christmas and visit you and give you a special Christmas gift." I thanked Liz for her visit and said, "Thank you for your kindness and generosity. However, your gift must be not money, not Christmas cake, not chocolate, not food, not drink." She said good bye and left to catch her train home.

The day before Christmas, Liz came again and brought me a very simple gift. However, it was very significant and meaningful for me. It was a Wooden Cross which has a very strange shape (*see the picture page 3*). She put it in my palm and asked me to hold it all the time.

Liz told me, "This cross is home made. I spent 4 hours to shape it. I have made it with all my heart, mind and soul. It is unique and just for you. I give it to you to be with you all the time, especially when you face sadness, loneliness, temptations and sufferings with severe pains."

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She added, "When you face these things, hold this cross and pray: **'Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, bless me now and at the hour of my death. Amen.'**"

Normally, in our life, people value a gift by how much it costs. Liz gave me a priceless gift. A wooden cross she shaped with a sharp knife. Liz is a Pastoral Associate, not a carpenter. Therefore, she couldn't make the wooden cross perfectly. It looks like a strange cross. However, I was very happy to accept it as a special Christmas gift from a very kind and generous lady. From that moment, I have held it in my hand all the time.



It was very effective for me. It is very difficult to understand, from the time I started to hold it in my hand, it helped me to reduce the pains, decrease my stress, my depression and help me to sleep easily, deeply and long. It was more effective than medicines and drugs. Suddenly a simple Christmas gift became a 'remedy' to help me to forget pain, loneliness and sadness. The gift was simple but had a very high healing effect.

After six years, I am still carefully keeping the Cross. I am keeping it not as a valuable or rare item, but it is a gift that has helped me through the difficult times and whenever I look at it or hold it, I am reminded of the gifts that Liz and many others have given me which have built me up to who I am today.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to wish Fr. Owen Doyle, Fr. Steven Rigo and Fr. Dong Tran, all the Parishes' Staff, and Parishioners A MERRY CHRISTMAS and A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR. I hope all of you will receive a lot of best wishes and special gifts. May our Lord Jesus Christ bless you and your family always!

Fr Tao Pham

### **BAPTISMS**

Congratulations and welcome to the following children who were baptised recently: Sebastian Young, Joshua Burchfield, Zoe Price, Lily Heenan, Raphael and Sylvie Kilkenny, William Kilkenny, Jessie Hicks, Frankie Leonard, John Schuper, Ava Calderone, Ned Williams, Archie Dal Santo, Toby and Nico Lafanci-Rafferty, Ava Campanelli, Carla Ciavarella, Marley Johnston, Luca and Joshua Costabile, Evelyn Cleal, Mikayla David, Zoe Hadjitelemachou, Sophia Angilletta, Tia Tosevski, Alexander Granata, Alannah Evans, Levi Nielsen, Charles D'Arcy, Henry Ladner, Toby Johansen, Millie and Hudson Mc Neill, Tiarna Kirk, Charlotte Adams, Samantha Lafranchi, Joseph Napoleone, Tom Tabasco, Noah Leone and Lara Ellis.

### **RECENTLY DECEASED**

Condolences to the families of recently deceased Vincenzina Varalla, Nadia Mefflin, and Lillian Edwards.

### **COMMUNION VISITS**

A group of volunteers continue home visits taking Holy Communion to people who are unable to come to Church.

They also visit Bupa Nursing Home and Leith Park Retirement Village on a regular basis.

If anyone is not able to attend Church and would like to receive Holy Communion at home please phone 9434 7373

### **PASTORAL VISIT**

If anyone would like a pastoral visit please contact Christina O'Connor: phone 9434 7373 or email: greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au

### **FAMILY CATECHETICS**

For children at government schools registration is now open for those who wish to receive their First Eucharist or be Confirmed. Please contact Josette or Lisa on 94341246 or email them at: cagbn@vic.chariot.net.au

### **PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL**

The PPC meet on a regular basis to discuss Parish business. If you would like to have any Parish issues discussed at our PPC meetings please either: phone 9434 7373 or email: greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au



# INDIA 2017 Mission



On the 16<sup>th</sup> September Kevin and I, along with 3 teachers and 3 students from Parade College set off for India. This was Kevin's 8<sup>th</sup> trip and my 3<sup>rd</sup>. It was interesting to observe the boys' reactions when we arrived in Kolkata. They were all agog as we travelled by taxi from the airport to the Christian Brothers' house late on a Saturday night. As soon as you walk out of the airport, you know you are somewhere very different from home. The heat and humidity hits like a brick wall and suddenly you are surrounded by the noise, the crowds, the smells and the madness as the taxi winds its way through the narrow, crowded, busy streets, all the while confronting you with the obvious poverty.

The boys admitted later to being afraid, especially of the large groups of young men 'hanging around' the streets and thought they might 'hijack' our taxi. St. Mary's Dum Dum, our home for the week, was like an oasis amongst all the mayhem. Just outside the gates, real life in India cannot be ignored as each day we manoeuvred our way through fruit, fish and chicken stalls spread on the ground, piles of rubbish, huge puddles of filthy water, bedraggled beggars under the railway bridge and a constant stream of traffic of all types, with horn honking a constant. It is amazing how quickly you can adapt and make your way to the local station with more confidence each day.

Our main reason for visiting India so frequently is to visit several projects which we support on an ongoing basis. In Kolkata we spent 3 days teaching at St. George's school for the poor, visited Loreto Sealdah school for girls and the 5 girls we sponsor, including visits to 4 of their 'homes'. We met Rose, a gorgeous 6 year old, who lives with her parents and grandparents in a room in a slum: the room is about the size of our laundry! Where they all sleep is beyond my imagining as there was only one bed, yet everything else was neat and tidy and the family were so pleased to welcome us.

We also spent a day working with the Sisters of Charity in 2 homes for disabled orphans. Most of the children suffer from cerebral palsy but in the

homes they are cared for, fed and kept clean as opposed to being abandoned on the streets.

One highlight in Kolkata was attending a day / night cricket match between Australia and India. Although Australia lost, we were treated like celebrities by the all Indian crowd, many of whom wanted 'selfies' taken with us. It was such fun and demonstrated the warmth of the Indian people.

Next stop was Providence School in Shillong in the far north east of India. Providence educates children too poor to receive an education elsewhere. We lived in the school, took classes, ran a Fun Day for the children on a Public Holiday, painted a classroom and enjoyed the warm welcome we always receive by students and staff. Time spent at Providence is always the high point of any trip because we stay long enough to establish and renew relationships with the children especially. Thanks to donations from groups such as ours, the school is thriving and children are really making progress. Kevin and I were delighted to be visited by some students who have now gone on to Tertiary level; this is beyond any dreams or expectations when the school was first started in 2000 and demonstrates real hope for a better future.

While in Shillong we were privileged to attend the opening of a Medical Centre in the remote village of Lyngkoi. This Centre was funded by Vinnies Victoria, so we were invited as VIP guests and Kevin was asked to give a speech. He delighted the crowd by thanking them in the local Khasi language.

A quick visit to Delhi brought our trip to an end. We would like to thank the many generous parishioners who gave us money before we left. Every cent was given directly to support the various centres we visit and was received with much gratitude. May God bless you all for your support.

Sue McMahon





can't

can't 

can't 

can   
by @ereephic

“When you are the neediest,  
He is the most sufficient.

When you are completely helpless,  
He is the most helpful.

When you feel totally dependent,  
He is absolutely dependable.

When you are the weakest,  
He is the most able.

When you are the most alone,  
He is intimately present.

When you feel you are the least,  
He is the greatest.

When you feel the most useless,  
He is preparing you.

When it is the darkest,  
He is the only Light you need.

When you feel the least secure,  
He is your Rock and Fortress.

When you are the most humble,  
He is most gracious.

When you can't,  
He can.”

Author Unknown



# PHILIPPINES 2017 Mission



Sr Nelia Llanto SJDB, a Pastorelle Sister who worked at Loyola for many years participated in the Catholic School of Evangelisation (CSOE) '7 Young People in the Gospel' course at Box Hill North, in July 2016. She captured the CSOE vision & it was there she first

mentioned the possibility of taking the course to the Philippines. I think my reply was a protracted "Oooh". (I had been involved in 2 outreaches to the Philippines over 20 years ago & returned with a huge dose of culture shock.)

Sr Nelia worked hard to promote a "7 YPITG" course at Watsonia in December & as we were setting up for it, she again mentioned how she would like to take the course to the Philippines. I said we would need a minimum of 3 people to go. I thought Melbourne CSOE could fund only 1 fare & so we would need a miracle to fund 2 air fares & other expenses.

Sr Nelia's desire, plus prayer, produced a miracle beyond all expectations. A team of four, including 2 St Thomas' parishioners (Emilia Sacchetta & myself) left Melbourne 30 June & returned 19 July after presenting 72 sessions in 3 Dioceses. Through the generosity of 3 people we had 3 fares donated & travel insurance covered. Other good people provided not only the air fare for a fourth person but also various materials for the courses & equipment left in the Philippines for courses to be duplicated.

Almost as soon as Sr Nelia returned to live in Manilla late last December, she got busy visiting Bishops & Archbishops in the various Dioceses & they warmly approved of & welcomed our ministry.

The day after our arrival we presented a 'Eucharist' course to the RE teachers of the Imus Diocese. That night we returned to Manilla to catch an overnight bus to San Fernando La Union, arriving at 3am to discover a priest visiting from USA had taken the accommodation reserved for us! Sr Nelia went into action & we were soon in comfortable beds in a small hotel on cross roads where it seemed obligatory to sound horns before, during & after passing through the intersection.

We started with a 3 day course 'John the Beloved Disciple' for all the RE teachers from the Diocese. The next 2 days we gave 2 more 'Eucharist' courses – 1 day to parish leaders from the north of the Diocese & the the following day to those from

the south. At the end of the day we moved all our equipment & set up in a new location to start bright & early the next morning for a 2 day '7YPITG' course for the Diocesan youth chaplain & leaders.

Next morning we squeezed all our equipment & ourselves into a van & off we went to Lingayen-Dagupan Diocese, setting up immediately so as to be ready to welcome 42 seminarians early the next morning to spend 3 days with us participating in a 'John the Beloved Disciple' course.

I could not guess how many 'JTBD' courses I have been involved in during the past 23 years. This was the stand out one, truly a blessing for us. These young men (and a 61 year old widower, pursuing a late vocation) have journeyed together over many years. They have a connection with each other & share a common goal. They were fun loving & enthusiastic. On day 1 they asked how they could get the course 'module' so they could pass it on to others. There would be 'ooohs' & 'aaaahs' at some PowerPoint presentations, particularly candles magically lit on the screen. One of them has noted on Facebook: "I hope we can train more disciples to train others like what you're doing." When it came time to role play, they entered into it 100% making their depiction very relevant to the issues of today, e.g. hypocrisy, alcohol, drugs, promiscuity & crime, displaying a very creative cache of weapons.

For the more serious exercises there was a depth of spirituality & sharing rarely witnessed to such a degree in other 'JTBD' courses. Another Facebook comment: "You've let me experience how to hear the heartbeat of our Lord Jesus, & experience His presence at His side."

They sang in such beautiful harmony. I am sure the team will not forget the spontaneous 'Power of Your Love' outside around a fire while the customary afternoon tropical downpour seemed to be an example of God's blessings pouring down as the praises went up.



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Their Rector wrote: *“You are an inspiration to our seminarians! They have learned so much from you. Your dedication & zeal in proclaiming God in the world today has opened the hearts of our seminarians to become more faithful disciples & evangelizers of the Lord.”*

The Mary Help of Christians Seminarians were a blessing for the team & as Emilia pointed out, we left part of our hearts with them.

When we had our 1 day off Sr Nelia turned us into tourists, jeepney ride included & we also enjoyed the kind hospitality of Archbishop Socrates Villegas (he prefers Fr Soc) who invited us to lunch.



L to R: Sr Nelia Llanto, Archbishop Socrates Villegas, Sandra Bishop, Trish Spiteri, Daniel Cecon & Emilia Sacchetta

That night we set up for another 2 day *‘7YPITG’* course for the chaplains & youth leaders from Lingayen - Dagupan & Alaminos Dioceses.

If you have been counting you will have worked out we had 1 day left to travel by bus to Manila in order to catch our return flight the next day.

Thanks to Sr Nelia & the Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd ‘Pastorelle’ we enjoyed their warm welcome & wonderful hospitality in each of the Dioceses & in Manilla.

I doubt the team ever truly got used to not flushing toilet paper or ‘showers’ via bucket & ladle, but each agreed how it was a blessing & privilege to be ‘on mission’ where we met the beautiful joyful people of the Philippines.

We pray now that the CSOE 2Tim.2:2 principle of *passing what you have heard from me to reliable people who can pass it on to others* will bear much fruit in the Philippines & beyond, thanks, of course to Sr Nelia’s desire, the many prayers & miracles.

Sandra Bishop

## Man and a Fork



There was a young man who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. So as he was getting his things ‘in order’ he contacted his Priest and had him come to his house to discuss certain aspects of his final wishes.

He told him which songs he wanted sung at the service, what scriptures he would like read, and what outfit he wanted to be buried in. Everything was in order and the Priest was preparing to leave when the young man suddenly remembered something very important to him.

“There’s one more thing,” he said excitedly.

“What’s that?” came the Priest’s reply.

“This is very important,” the young man continued.

“I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand.”

The Priest stood looking at the young man, not knowing quite what to say.

“That surprises you, doesn’t it?” the young man asked.

“Well, to be honest, I’m puzzled by the request,” said the Priest.

The young man explained. “My grandmother once told me this story, and from that time on I have always tried to pass along its message to those I love and those who are in need of encouragement. In all my years of attending socials and dinners, I always remember that when the dishes of the main course were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, ‘Keep your fork’. It was my favourite part because I knew that something better was coming ... like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie. Something wonderful and with substance! So, I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder ‘What’s with the fork?’ Then I want you to tell them: ‘Keep your fork ... the best is yet to come’.”

The Priest’s eyes welled up with tears of joy as he hugged the young man good-bye. He knew this would be one of the last times he would see him before his death. But he also knew that the young man had a better grasp of heaven than he did. He had a better grasp of what heaven would be like than many people twice his age, with twice as much experience and knowledge. He KNEW that something better was coming.

At the funeral people were walking by the young man’s casket and they saw the suit he was wearing and the fork placed in his right hand. Over and over, the Priest heard the question, “What’s with the fork?” And over and over he smiled.

During his message, the Priest told the people of the conversation he had with the young man shortly before he died. He also told them about the fork and about what it symbolised to him. He told the people how he could not stop thinking about the fork and told them that they probably would not be able to stop thinking about it either.

He was right. So the next time you reach down for your fork let it remind you, ever so gently, that the best is yet to come.



# CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

<b>VIGIL MASS</b> Sun 24 Dec	6.00pm	Sacred Heart Parish, Diamond Creek
	6.30pm	St Mary's Greensborough
	7.30pm	St. Thomas the Apostle, Greensborough Nth
	9.00pm ("Midnight" Mass)	Sacred Heart Parish, Diamond Creek
	12.00 midnight	St Mary's Greensborough
<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b> Mon 25 Dec	8.00am	St Mary's Greensborough
	9.00am	Sacred Heart Parish, Diamond Creek
	10.00am	St Mary's Greensborough
	10.30am	St Thomas the Apostle, Greensborough Nth

**Christmas waves a magic wand over  
this world, and behold, everything  
is softer and more beautiful**

Norman Vincent Peale

**God never gives someone a gift they are  
not capable of receiving. If he gives us the  
gift of Christmas, it is because we all have  
the ability to understand and receive it.**

POPE FRANCIS


**The Way Prayer Group**  
Meets each Thursday night at  
Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham  
for a varied program focusing on spiritual growth.

**WHEN:** 8pm Thurs  
**WHERE:** Gathering Space, Our Lady Help of Christians,  
4 Henry Street, Eltham  
**MASS:** **Every 3rd Thursday of the month** at  
Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham,  
7.30pm Praise & Worship, 8.00pm Mass

**ENQUIRIES:** Emilia 9435 7475, Rose 9434 3962,  
Sandra 9434 7553

**FUNERAL LITURGY PREPARATION BOOKLET**

**To receive this booklet  
containing suggested readings,  
hymns, prayers etc. in  
PDF format email:  
sandraebishop@optusnet.com.au**



**Mass Times**

**St Thomas**  
Sunday Mass: Vigil Sat. 6pm; Sun. 10.30am  
Tue & Thurs 9.15am

**Sacred Heart, Diamond Creek**  
Sunday Mass: 9am;  
Wed & Fri 9.15am.

**St Peter's, Hurstbridge**  
Sunday Mass: Vigil 1st Sat. of month 7.15pm

**Reconciliation**  
Friday Sacred Heart 9.30-10.00am  
Saturday: St Thomas 9.30-10.00am

YOUR ZONE.....

YOUR MESSENGER.....

YOUR MESSENGER'S PH. NO.....

St Thomas Parish, 251 Diamond Creek Road,  
Greensborough North, 3088

Telephone: 9434 7373  
for Sacraments, Administration & General Enquiries

Parish Email: greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au

**Parish Priest**  
Fr Steven Steven.Rigo@cam.org.au  
Telephone 9432 2515  
For after hours & emergencies

**Assistant Priest**  
Fr Tao Pham taohautrach@gmail.com

Deanery: www.diamondvalleydeanery.org.au

Parish Website: www.pol.org.au?greensboroughnorth