

# Blessings

**News and reflections from St Louis de Montfort's Aspendale  
and St Brigid's Mordialloc**



**Issue 02 February/March 2017**

# Welcome

As I write this, it is hard to believe that we are already at the end of February 2017 and only a few days away from the start of a new Lenten season. How did you go with your New Year's resolutions? Did you even make any? It's never too late.

Since the first edition of "Blessings" we have had to say farewell to Fr. Patrick and Deacon Joe. Farewells are never easy and for both Patrick and Joe we witnessed two men who have given so much to our parish communities making the farewell very difficult. We know that they are both held close to our hearts and whenever we travel out to the parishes of Melton South and Bacchus Marsh, I'm sure that we can pop in. Joe has been appointed to St. Roch's, Glen Iris but we may see him taking his dog for a walk in our local area as his home is nearby.

We welcome Fr. Justel Callos who joined us on the 8<sup>th</sup> February. He was ordained with Fr. Patrick back in September 2015 and he was appointed to St. Fidelis', Moreland. We welcome Justel and I know that he will fit in well. You can read about him further in this publication.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Jekot".

Fr. Andrew Jekot  
Parish Priest  
St. Louis de Montfort's  
Aspendale and St. Brigid's  
Mordialloc

Thank you to all who have given feedback about the first edition of "Blessings". Please continue to respond with any comments about how the publication can improve. We have had a positive response with the opportunity for businesses to advertise which offsets some costs involved. Do you have a business that you would like to advertise?

I thank Berna (editor) for her enthusiasm and work in organizing another fruitful edition of "Blessings"

Fr. Andrew

## Editor's Note

In this our second issue of Blessings, I invite you to relax with a cuppa and enjoy interesting stories that will give you a closer affinity with the people in our community.

**interest** has a profile on each of the candidates taking the important step to become Catholics via their commitment to the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults.

**"talking with"** features a lovely farewell by Fr. Patrick and a warm hello from our new Assistant Priest Fr Justel Callos.

**involve** has a story of endurance and gratitude from the Burney family, and showcases the selfless care of our Justice Action Group.

Please do contact me with your thoughts and suggestions I'd love to hear from you.

Berna Wake  
Editor, Blessings.  
Berna.Wake@cam.org.au





## Fantastic Festival 2017



**Sunday March 26 2017 St. Louis' School Grounds  
12.00 noon – 5.00pm**

## Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

The RCIA is likened to a spiritual journey which involves a series of sessions with those who are seeking to know God in and through our Catholic church. We have a team of parishioners who walk with these folk as they learn about the life of Jesus through the Gospels. They pray together, and discuss what the Gospel message means for us in our everyday life. There is an important focus on developing a personal relationship with Jesus, a friendship which will last the journey of their life. Another aspect of the session is to enlighten, inform and discuss Catholic beliefs and practices.

**Bernadette Carr** Adapted from 'What are you Seeking?' The Office of Evangelization

## Meet our RCIA Candidates



My name is Emma Eddington. I'm completing my sacraments because I truly believe in God and have loved learning more about my religion and sharing this journey with others.

My name is Vanessa Ditcham. I have been searching for a place to 'belong' as a Christian. I have met some amazing people on my journey and working in Catholic Education gave me the opportunity to meet some inspiring people who were open to my questions about my faith. Being a Catholic is important to me.



Someone said, "Haven't you left it a bit late?"  
"With God, it is never a bit late."  
So. Here is Jackie Abel asking for confirmation.  
My search has ended. I have stopped.  
Welcome Jesus. Alleluia!



My name is Kesha West. I am married and have two beautiful boys, Koen and Zak. For us, family and community is the most important thing and we have been so welcomed into the local parish, and in particular to Parkdale, since we moved here two years ago. Growing up I had the benefit of a wonderful Catholic education in Queensland and every day I endeavour to instil in my children those same values and sense of community.



## Meet our RCIA Candidates



My name is Mark Winberg. I am a teacher at St Bede's College in Mentone, a proud Catholic school. The Catholic values and beliefs associated with the College have inspired me to start this journey into becoming Catholic myself. I look forward to becoming part of your community.

Our names are Andrew and Dina Favas and being a Catholic to us means: Being CATHOLIC and walking in life next to God means becoming a better person. It means trying to find God in our everyday lives and trusting him that he will truly be there for us when we need him to guide us through the hard times in our life, and celebrate with us when we receive Gods many blessings. Being Catholic teaches us to be more tolerant with each other and teaches us through faith how to truly forgive one another during difficult times. Being Catholic means trusting God always and having a deep connection with him always. Only through faith and faith alone we will truly find inner peace and happiness.



My name is Neil Williams. I started this RCIA journey with the Hope of being blessed with the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion this was so I could finally marry my amazing wife Sandra with God's blessing. We were lucky enough to be married whilst visiting Sandra's family in Colombia over Christmas.

My name is Vicki Dagher. Being involved in the RCIA program has been great! Going to Mass, pondering the Scriptures and the presence and meaning of God in my life has been very fulfilling. I've always had the certainty that God's been with me every step of the way, but to share in that knowledge with a group of lovely people, guided by Fr Andrew and the RCIA team, has been a wonderful experience. I feel very blessed and am looking forward to becoming a full member of the Parish at Easter time.





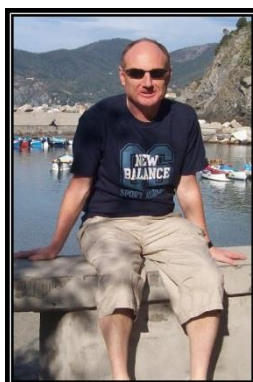
## Meet our new St Brigid's Teachers

Our year has commenced with much excitement and anticipation. Each New Year brings with it much change as we continue to grow and evolve. This year we have welcomed 38 new Preps, 7 new students from Years 1-6 and 3 new staff into our vibrant learning community. Below we have the chance to meet our three new staff members: Wendy Sullivan: Deputy Principal and Learning & Teaching Leader, Arch Cochrane: Year 5/6 Teacher and Gabbi Peters: Phys Ed and Sport Teacher.

**Michael Russo Principal St Brigid's**



Hi, my name is Wendy Sullivan. I am the new Deputy Principal and Learning and Teaching Leader at St Brigid's. I have come from St Brendan's in Somerville where I was Deputy Principal and Student Services Coordinator. I believe that education is a school/family partnership and it is so very important to work together to make each child's education a positive, challenging and supported experience. I am looking forward to meeting all families at St Brigid's.



Hello, I am Arch Cochrane. I am very happy to join the St Brigid's community and have felt extremely welcomed. I have taught in a variety of schools with a variety of capacities. I have come from St Peters East Bentleigh where I held a variety of positions. I am married with two children and a cavoodle. I support St Kilda and attend most matches in Melbourne. I enjoy travelling and spent eight weeks last year in Italy with my family.



My name is Gabrielle Peters and I grew up in a small country town with great support from my family and especially from my grandparents with my dad being in the Navy. St. Joseph's in Crib Point was a great foundation for my education beginning with a very special ability in teaching us about our faith and community support. I later attended Padua College in Mornington where it became evident that teaching was to be my future journey. After finishing University I then returned back to where my education journey began and was so proud to become part of the teaching staff at St. Joseph's. The last 2 years were an amazing opportunity to develop my skills and build some amazing relationships with children, their families and now my teaching family. I have learnt so much and can not wait to share my future knowledge and love of Physical Education with my new family at St. Brigid's.

## St Louis' School Exciting Building Plans – State of the Art Learning Centre on the way

St Louis School will be embarking on an exciting \$6 million Building Development Project in 2017.

The project will include a new two-storey learning centre and a Performing Arts Centre.

Six classroom learning spaces, a multipurpose area, small group work space, teacher planning area and student toilets will feature on each floor of the two-storey learning centre. A performing arts space will also be added to the back of the school's hall to support our arts program as well as providing valuable back stage dressing room access to the hall stage for groups that use our community hall for productions.

Following the de-registration of our previous architect in mid-2015, Minx Architects were appointed in December 2015 to develop a new School Master Building Plan and Staged approach to implementing this plan. They have looked at the project through a different lens and we are extremely happy with plans that have been developed. We expect the project to go to tender shortly with building to commence mid-year and be completed by the end of 2018.

This means St Louis school will finally realise its vision of replacing portable classrooms with a permanent learning centre. The Prep modular building and Adventure playground will be relocated on site to make way for the new learning centre.

The project has been made possible through funding of \$1.7 million from the State Government Capital Building Fund, \$0.5 million from a Supplementary Capital Grant from the Catholic Education Office and a loan for \$3.8 approved by the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

**Tom Lindeman Principal St Louis'**



## Wedding Congratulations



Kerrin Jamieson and Sean Crowder at St Brigid's on January 27 2017. Kerrin is the daughter of Carmel & David Jamieson (Aspendale), and Sean is the son of Rodney & Lynnette Crowder (Lancefield).



Katherine Anne Fenwick and Benjamin Mark Wapling at St Brigid's on February 18 2017. Katherine is the daughter of Grant & Jennifer (Parkdale) and Benjamin is the son of Gregory & Judith.



Alexandra Taylor and Henry Wills at Star of The Sea Chapel Gardenvale on January 14 2017. Alexandra is the daughter of Sandra & Mark Taylor (Aspendale), and Henry is the son of Heather & Peter Wills.

## We pray for the following children & their families who were baptised recently:

- Aston John Cook** Son of Jacqueline & Sam Cook
- Jensen Bailey Tan** Son of Jun-Ni Tan & Bao-Anh Quoc Nguyen
- Oliver Leigh Laycock** Son of Amelia Bail & Scott Laycock
- Xander Rupert Kuperus** Son of Jaquie & Dennis Kuperus
- Ian Michael Young** Son of Gemma & Michael Young
- Benjamin William Crowe** Son of Kimberley Flanagan-Crowe & Justin Crowe
- Leo Andreotti** Son of Celine Marchenay & Adrian Andreotti
- Vincent Michele Bruno** Son of Maria Nota & Gennj Bruno
- Madison Anastasia Elms** Daughter of Katrina Guida & Mitch Elms
- Liam Ronald & Sean Vincent Rellis** Children of Niall & Simone Rellis
- Ethan John, Nellie Joy & Jay Jeffrey Rowse** Children of Sam & Lisa Rowse





## Diamond Wedding Anniversary

Congratulations to Jim and Norma Dawkins who celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on January 26 2017. Jim and Norma's wedding was the first nuptial mass celebrated in the newly opened St Brigid's on Australia Day 1957.



## In Sympathy

### Our thoughts & prayers are with:



Craig Blair (39).  
Son of Josie.  
Craig's funeral was  
at St Brigid's on  
January 6 2017.



Phyllis Dynes (95).  
Mother of Anne  
Sherlock, Bob and  
Aileen Dynes  
(daughter in law).  
Phyllis's funeral was  
at St Louis' on  
January 10 2017.



Richard Howe (71).  
Husband of Joanna  
and father of Craig.  
Richard's funeral  
was at St Brigid's on  
January 20 2017.



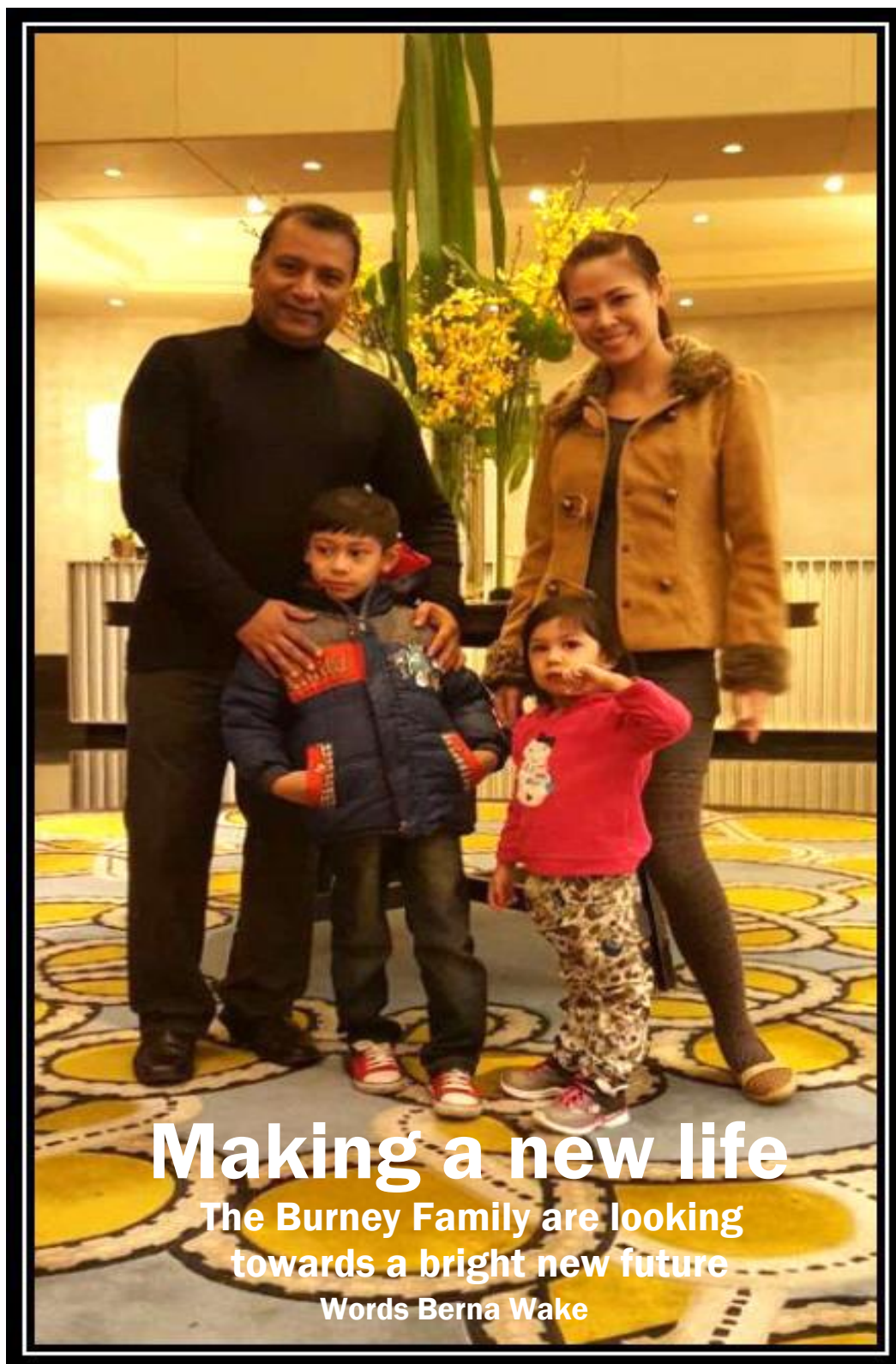
William Fitzgerald (89).  
Husband of Margaret  
(Peg), Uncle of Geraldine.  
William's funeral was at St  
Brigid's on December 14  
2016.



Carmelina Inguanti (77).  
Wife of Gerry.  
Carmelina's funeral was at  
St Brigid's on February 2  
2017.



Susan O'Keeffe (55).  
Wife of John.  
Susan's funeral was at  
St Brigid's on February  
8 2017.



## Making a new life

The Burney Family are looking  
towards a bright new future

Words Berna Wake

**I** met an extraordinary family recently whose story was a remarkable one of endurance

to overcome persecution, wrongful imprisonment, abuse and the loss of all their material possessions, and yet their spirit and faith in humanity remains undiminished.

Burney, Emman, Alif and Elisa have recently settled into “Chelsea, the most beautiful place in the world to live.”

Burney Syed’s parents along with many of the Urdu speaking Indian population migrated to Karachi Pakistan when the country became independent from the British Raj in 1947. The Urdu speaking Muhajir were disadvantaged in their new country by a quota system that favoured the original Sindhi population with regards university and civil service placements.

A young 13 yo Burney was encouraged by a speech he listened to by a political group, the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), launched to protect the Urdu speaking, Muhajir community. Burney joined the MQM, and very quickly suffered his first experience of political oppression. He was beaten and imprisoned on several occasions during his teenage years.” My mother had to sell her jewellery to get me out of jail.”

“I had many friends who just went missing, never to return,”



**“They were the messengers of God. They gave us hope when we were hopeless. “**

## LIFE INTERRUPTED

After his imprisonments and beatings, Burney’s life became one of saving enough money to leave Pakistan as often as possible to avoid further imprisonment. On one such trip, he studied Hotel Management in Switzerland.

In the mid 2000’s the situation in Karachi seemed more stable so Burney re-settled there with his Thai wife Emman. He was no longer affiliated with MQM, and he had a good job in security, selling Australian made speedboats and software to the Pakistan government. Life was finally calm and peaceful, until he got word that the authorities had “run a background check and his previous political affiliations and imprisonment” had been discovered”. He was advised he had to get out of the country immediately.

This meant leaving everything, their family, a good home, a settled life and a promising career, and flee Pakistan yet again. “We only had the clothes we were wearing and one bag.” The work Burney had been doing with Australian companies meant he had valid visas for the family. They arrived in Melbourne on October 2016 with no idea where to go and what to do. With the little money, they had, they rented a motel room and engaged an immigration lawyer. Emman said “With our money running out, I went on the internet and found the Brigadine Asylum seekers.” (BAS)

## HOPE AT LAST

BAS provided emergency housing, “They even brought us Thai food.” BAS contacted our Justice Action Group (JAG) and temporary housing was found in Chelsea. Helen and Calvin Rocks, Maree and Phillip Morris and John Meyer from JAG were there to open their hearts and arms to embrace the family. A fundraising luncheon with dishes prepared by Emman and Burney has raised funds for the family. 6-year-old Alif is at Chelsea PS and Burney has started chef training at William Angliss. Once back on their feet, Burney promises “to donate part of his salary to those in need to repay the gratitude his family has received.”

**DO YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED?** This is just one of the many stories arising out of the work of JAG. If you would like to get involved and be part of the JAG Team, please contact me at [Berna.Wake@cam.org.au](mailto:Berna.Wake@cam.org.au)



# “talking with” Fr Patrick Bradford

## Blessings

The past few weeks have been surprisingly emotional for me, as I have prepared to take on my new appointment at the parishes of Bacchus Marsh and Melton South on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Beneath the everyday interactions and exchanges, things like daily mass, home visitations, visits to schools and nursing homes, I have discovered a great love and respect for the Priest and The Person he represents. It is only in these last few weeks that I have finally caught a glimpse of how strong and deep are the roots of your faith.

Saint Ambrose once wrote **“No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks.”** It is not only my duty, but also my privilege to write these few words in reflection of my time at St Louis’ and St Brigid’s. Some of you have belonged to these respective parishes for many years; while others have only become involved more recently. The diversity of the parish reflects the universality of our Catholic faith, a faith that is big and broad enough for everyone to find their place. This is a faith that I have been honoured to nourish and nurture, especially through The Sacraments.

As I look out into the congregation at mass, or during a baptism or wedding or funeral, I have come to see that behind each face, there lies a story of faith, perseverance and resilience. I have been surprised by the courage that so many manage to muster, in facing the challenges of family, work, sickness and loss, as you find the strength to carry your cross with Christ each day.

I have been edified by the joy that you live by finding God in the small things that happen each day in family life. I have been impressed by the single-minded devotion and deep care for the needy in our parish, the lonely who are housebound or in nursing homes, and the refugee and asylum seeker in community that are so passionately defended in word and deed. I have been strengthened by the devotion and piety of so many who come to mass and pray not only for themselves, but the needs of their family, our local community and beyond. One of the things I have learnt, is **never to judge a book by its cover, because sometimes it’s the books that have a few rips and tears on the cover, that turn out to hold the best stories of love, faith and hope**



**My farewell lunch** brought many of us together as a chance to give thanks to God for the blessings that he has bestowed on our parishes. I was touched by the kind words and farewells that were exchanged, along with the cards, handmade mementos and the monetary gift that reflect your incredible generosity and kindness. The most treasured gift that I take with me is the encouragement and affirmation that I have received from so many of you in my first months of ministry. **You have borne patiently with me in my frailty and weakness, and you have grown with me in a year of many firsts: school masses, weddings, funerals, baptisms, Christmas and Easter. These are the memories that I will hold and treasure for the rest of my Priesthood.**

St Paul once said to the Christian community in Corinth “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth”. We Priests are humbly aware that we only play our small part in the great symphony which is the Church, and so we leave it to others to continue the work that we began. I’m sure Fr Justel Callos will make a wonderful contribution to the life of St Louis’ and St Brigid’s, and that together with Fr Andrew, will enjoy the same welcome and support that I have enjoyed. Please continue to pray for me, and all the priests who serve in our Archdiocese.

**With love and affection, Father Patrick**

**FEBRUARY/MARCH 2017 ISSUE 02**

## Australia’s youngest priest

### GROWING UP

“ I grew up in a pretty devout Catholic household. I have an uncle who is a diocesan priest from my mother’s side and a Dominican nun from my father’s side.

So I guess you could say it runs in the blood.

At the age of 13, I attended the minor seminary.

To be honest, it was my mom who suggested I should give the seminary a go as she saw something special in me. Moving into the seminary at an early age was a big change, but eventually I got used to it and community life really taught me how to be independent at an early age. The Philippines is a basketball mad-country so we played basketball every day. I was pretty tall for a Filipino so my position was centre.

### COMING TO AUSTRALIA

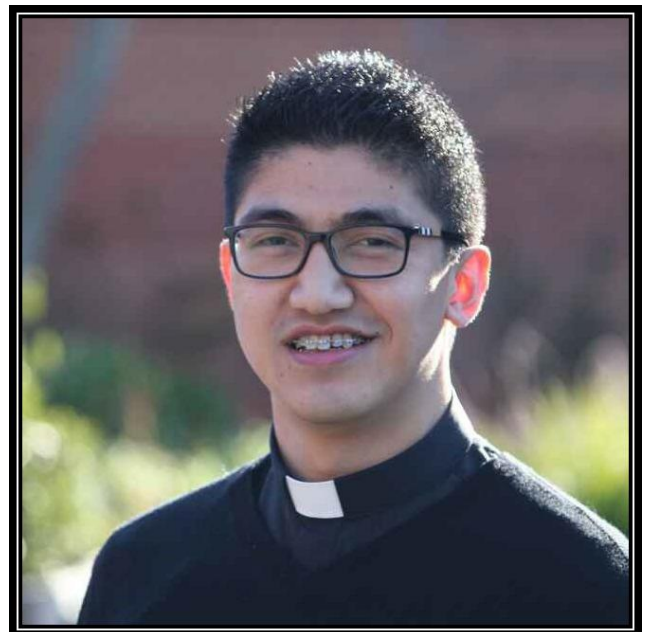
When we first came to Australia in 2008, I didn’t really intend to join the seminary again as I wanted “to experience life and explore the world.”

Unfortunately, within weeks after arriving in Australia my father suffered from a heart attack. He recovered but it made the first few months very difficult.

To support my family, I decided to work as a waiter in a Japanese restaurant in Melbourne Central.

My first job was really quite overwhelming for me, as I tried to get used to the new Australian way of life. But it was in this unlikely place that I discovered my vocation. During work I started to question what God’s plan was for me. So, on my work break I would spend my time going to St Francis’ Church for adoration. That reawakened my sense of vocation. It was the only place that I felt at peace—peace with myself and at peace with God. Those half-hour times were enough to discern my vocation. Fast forward to seven years and I was ordained a priest in 2015 together with six other fine men. Our ordination to the priesthood was indeed a very special day for all of us.

“ My vocation to the priesthood did not fall from the sky.



### MY JOURNEY CONTINUES

As I embark on another step in my priestly ministry, I look forward to sharing each other’s joys and sorrows as we build the parish communities of Mordialloc and Aspendale. I also want to honour Fr. Patrick Bradford, my predecessor, for sharing his life and ministry with you. I’m sure he inspired a lot of you through his example of self-giving love.

I am skinny in appearance but I do have a strong appetite! So, my goals are to share meals with you at home and enjoy each other’s company. I love Asian food but a nice roast is also just as good! If you don’t see me at church, on my spare time, I enjoy playing the organ, travelling, hiking and CrossFit.

Father Justel Callos

## Father Andrew's Word



### Preparing for Lent

Lent is upon us. We mark the celebration of Lent with Ash Wednesday. It is a day of fasting for Catholics as are all Friday's in Lent.

Catholics are not alone in the act of fasting, with Muslims traditionally fasting in the holy month of Ramadhan and the increasingly popular 5/2 diet (5 days normal eating and 2 day's calorie restricted) to name just two.

Is this the time you dust off the New Year's resolution (again) and think, I'm quitting sugar, carbs or booze?

Pope Francis asks us to reconsider what does our fasting really mean? His view is that fasting must never become superficial. He often quotes the early Christian mystic John Chrysostom who said: "No act of virtue can be great if it is not followed by advantage for others. So, no matter how much time you spend fasting, no matter how much you sleep on a hard floor and eat ashes and sigh continually, if you do no good to others, you do nothing great."


So, if you get asked the question in the next few days "What are you giving up for Lent?" I ask you to think about Pope Francis' thoughts. If you want to get fitter and healthier, then yes, giving up chocolate and alcohol will help, but if you want to become a better person, consider reaching out to others instead – visiting an elderly neighbour, making peace with a foe, cooking a meal for someone whose doing it hard.

I suggest to you, that this will make your Lenten experience far more enriching and rewarding.

Fr Andrew








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**next issue**  
**End April 2017**

**Easter**  
**Celebration**

**RCIA**  
**neophytes**

**talking with**  
**Mystery Guest???**

**& much more...**

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