

The Eyrie

St John's Catholic Parish Heidelberg



Santa Catalina Catholic Parish
Dinalupihan
Bataan Province
Philippines
1st March 2018

Dear Parishioners of St John's Heidelberg,

Thank you for generous contribution of \$6,200.00 raised from the monthly gold coin collections in your parish. Your donation will greatly assist our Jose' De Piro Kabataan (youth) Orchestra.

Santa Catalina parish is in a poor part of the Philippines. The main source of employment in this area is in the rice fields, but often this is not enough to provide support for the whole family. Consequently a large number of parents have had to go overseas for work, leaving their children and families behind. Some children may only get to see their parents once every five years! One of the aims of our ministry is to try to resolve this issue; we cannot resolve the whole problem, but we hope to be able to make a difference in the lives of some of our parishioners.

The youth orchestra which was started 2012 is providing the children in our parish with something to aspire to and engage with. These children, who would have otherwise spent their evenings and their holidays roaming the village streets, now gather on the church grounds to play in a safe environment, practice their instruments and also share in prayer meetings. It is very exciting for us to note that in only a few years, we have an 80 strong orchestra. We do provide the musicians with their instruments and pay for an instructor to visit and teach the children.

Learning music theory and an instrument can provide these children with an opportunity to find work when they grow up. We already have a number of students who have continued to study music at university level. Due to the poverty these children live in, it would never have been possible for them to undertake university studies. Your support assists us in this project, paying their university fees and helping them cover costs of travel, board and lodging in the city of Manila.

As the proverb goes: 'give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.' We can continue to provide these people with food, but they will need to keep coming back for more support. Hopefully with our project, and with your help, we can help these young adults to find work and be able to stand on their feet and support their family.

Often we get people visit from Australia and stay with us in the parish to participate in this ministry. I happily welcome you to visit if and when the opportunity arises. Once again, thank you for your generosity.

Fr Joe Cremona
Parish Priest



Tuning our instruments!

Kevin Andrews

St John's parishioner and Member of the House of Representatives

Since the early 1980s, the expression 'solidarity' has been synonymous with the independent trade union movement in Poland. Led by an electrician from the Gdańsk shipyards, Lech Wałęsa, Solidarity - *Solidarność* in Polish - attracted millions of members and international support that was critical in the eventual demise of the communist regime and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union.

The momentous events were inspired by another Pole, Karol Wojtyła, who visited his homeland after his election as Pope John Paul II in 1978. Speaking to hundreds of thousands of his country men and women, he called for freedom and respect for human rights and national and religious traditions.

The choice of the name 'Solidarity' for the movement reflected the significance of Christian ethical principles about human dignity, liberty and the pursuit of the common good.

These principles are established on the Christian belief that humans are created in the image and likeness of God. Each person has an inalienable dignity and must be treated always as an end, not only as a means.

Writing in his 1991 encyclical, *Centesimus Annus*, which commemorated and updated Leo XIII's great social document, *Rerum Novarum*, John Paul II observed: "It is necessary to keep in mind that the main thread, and in a certain sense the guiding principle. . . of the Church's social doctrine, is the correct view of the human person and of his unique value inasmuch as 'man is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself.'"

What flows from this understanding are three other principles: the common good, subsidiarity and solidarity.

The common good is "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals,



to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily."

It recognises that we exist, not as isolated individuals, but in community, in which the good of each is maximised within society. Unlike the utilitarian principle of the greatest good for the greatest number, which invariably results in the subordination of the minority, the common good seeks the worth of all.

Secondly, subsidiarity places a limit on the power of the state, and counters totalitarianism and collectivism by insisting that each decision should be taken at the lowest possible level. It seeks to protect the individual, the family and the community against the power of the State.

Complimenting subsidiarity is the principle of solidarity. It recognises that the human family is interconnected and inter-dependent. It renews our Christian duty to love one another.

Solidarity is not a feeling, which can be fulfilled by simply liking a Facebook post, or adding support to a social media campaign. It is a virtue in which we are encouraged to assume our responsibilities for each other and the world in which we live.

In his letter *On Social Concerns*, Pope John Paul II wrote: "Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all."

"Solidarity helps us to see the 'other' - whether a person, people or nation - not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our 'neighbour' a 'helper' to be made a sharer, on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God."

These principles underpin our Western Civilisation and international human rights instruments, such as the *Universal Declaration*. They also inform us about our decisions as individuals, in families and communities.

Applying these principles can be difficult in many circumstances, as conflicting claims and competing interests must be balanced.

They remind us however, of the important things we should bear in mind in making decisions about how we can best live together.

We would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this Land, the Wurundjeri people and of Elders past and present, on which our church and school stand. The St John's community joins together in solidarity with our Indigenous brothers and sisters, working for justice and reconciliation.

Reconciliation

31st May and 7th June



Over the past few weeks we celebrated the sacrament of Reconciliation with the children in our parish. I would like to share with you my reflections on this sacrament.

Reconciliation is very relevant, not only in our spiritual life, but also in our relationships. We humans often step on each other's feet and hurt one another. This sacrament teaches us how to rebuild our relationships.

The person who is hurt needs to forgive and let go of the hurt but reconciliation, restoring the friendship between the two parties, can only be achieved after the offender offers a sincere apology and admits to the mistakes committed; this is what happens when we confess our sins. Sometimes some form of reparation may be required. Only then can the offender be absolved and friendship restored.

We often confuse reconciliation with forgiveness. Reconciliation depends on forgiveness but does not happen automatically. After forgiveness has been granted, the two parties need to work at reconciliation. Among us humans this can often be very hard and at times cannot be arrived at!

Fr Mario

The sacrament consists of a number of elements:

Forgiveness

∞

Confession

∞

Penance

∞

Absolution

∞

Reconciliation.

Each element is needed.

I felt... worried, anxious, overwhelmed and excited.

I learned... the parables of forgiveness and that God wants us to forgive others to be more like Him.

I wondered... When will it be my turn? What will happen? Will I be forgiven? ★Amelia

I used.... manners when talking to Fr Mario.

I tried... to use the stories to help me figure out what Reconciliation was and it worked.

I learned... that apologising is not as easy as just saying sorry because you have to mean it. ★Matilda

I tried... to think of the Prodigal Son story.

I wondered... what sins to say.

I felt... excited because I was about to make my Reconciliation . ★Jaidyn

I felt... like it was lots of fun watching the videos and doing activities. I felt happy and excited.

I tried... to pay attention and try my hardest. I think I did. ★Ruby

I wondered... how long until our next Reconciliation.

I learned... more about the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son.

I felt... nervous and excited. ★Liam

With Respects Catering
withrespects.com.au
37 Greville Rd Rosanna 3084
T: 0422 038 817 ABN: 81870746819

welcome to
EAGLEMONT VILLAGE
SILVERDALE ROAD, EAGLEMONT
Melways Ref: 31 H6

FLETCHERS
Proudly supporting the community
Thomas Bechelli
0413 181 461
114 Lower Plenty Road, Rosanna 9430 1133
Fletchers.net.au

Gems

A social group of St John's Parish



One Sunday morning in December in last year Fr Mario introduced me to Elizabeth Williamson, knowing that we were both interested in starting a group in the Parish in 2018. In January we met to chat about the why, how and when.

No matter what age or stage of life we are at, connecting socially is extremely important to good health and wellbeing as well as contributing to our overall happiness and relaxation. It has been said - 'Happy Mind, Happy Body'.

Further, when thinking about Parish as Church, the thought of Church as Community is very important. Following the example of Jesus, we become a caring, supporting community by reaching out to others, by being accepting, understanding and welcoming of all.

St John's Gems is one way of being, and being a part of our local Parish, Church and Community, by connecting socially and becoming happier and more relaxed.

Our group gathered for the first time on the 27th February in the Parish Meeting Room. It was fantastic to see twenty people arrive for this get together where we talked about our vision, a possible name and the activities most attendees were interested in pursuing.

So far, we have gathered for fortnightly art activities, games such as 500, Bingo and Scrabble, and a guest speaker, Fr Peter Carrucan who talked to us about his work with asylum seekers. We had a video morning when we watched 'Lady in a Van', ate Jaffas and icecreams during the movie then sandwiches, cake, tea and coffee to follow.

But best of all during all these activities, there has been the happy buzz of lots of chatter and the many helpful hands in preparing for and tidying up after every gathering.

In coming weeks, we look forward to more art/craft activities, more games, guest speakers, a sing a long and a movie at the Palace Theatre, Balwyn.

We welcome you to join us, every fortnight on a Tuesday 10-12pm, in the Francis Xavier meeting room.

For further information please contact:

Elizabeth 0447 195 553 Jan 0423 478 504

KUMON

Tailored Learning. Endless Discoveries.

For 30 years, Kumon has been developing children's reading and calculation abilities, providing a strong foundation for learning in the classroom and everyday life. Contact your local Kumon Centre to find out more today.

KUMON HEIDELBERG EDUCATION CENTRE
187 Burgundy Street
Instructor: Maureen Hegarty
Tel: 0423 877 736

<http://au.kumonglobal.com>

Planning a funeral?
We understand your needs

The Lonergan & Erbacher families have a long association with St. John's Catholic Parish

LONERGAN & RAVEN
EST. 1849
FUNERAL DIRECTORS

contact Robert Erbacher:
0408 179 553
or our Clifton Hill office:
03 9489 8711
for an obligation-free quote

www.ravensfunerals.com.au

143 Lower Plenty Road Rosanna T. 9459 4933
159 Burgundy Street Heidelberg T. 9458 1555

sales@meridiantravel.com.au
meridiantravel.com.au

ESCAPE
EXPLORE DREAM DISCOVER

meridian
travel & cruise

ATAS
travel accredited

Marilyn McCann

Former Parish Secretary

In 1987 when our youngest child Patrick started at Kinder, a position was advertised for someone to come and do a few hours of secretarial work each week at the Presbytery. One month later, no one had come forward, so with Catholic guilt I volunteered. Little did I know that I would still be there until I retired 27 years later!

The Presbytery has always had an open door welcoming policy and the priests have always encouraged it. People came to the door for different reasons; whether it was morning tea after mass (which was always a great way to meet fellow parishioners) or for the people requiring financial assistance or simply food. Having a sense of humour helped as some needy people were fussy wanting particular foods with their sandwiches! You learn to be patient, compassionate and very conscious of people's feelings being in the role of the parish secretary.

It was a lovely place to work, with Sue O'Brien and my sidekick Lynne Ardley certainly helped make it that. Tuesday's was lunch day for the staff and many sandwiches, cakes, meals and chats were enjoyed around that kitchen table.

With St John's Anglican Parish down the hill, it has often been confusing. People would often come to a service; wedding, baptism or funeral intending to go St John's Anglican. We've even had flowers for a funeral delivered to the wrong church!

The parish has also been home to a variety of animals, both cats and dogs, which added a sense of family and belonging. Many times, I've had a cat sit on my lap while working on the computer. Numerous visiting priests who have stayed within the presbytery have reportedly seen or heard a ghost, particularly on the stair landing between the first and the second storey. While I have never seen or heard it, it must have been a friendly ghost, if one existed at all, as no one ever came to harm.

One thing I have always loved about St John's is the parish history. It was founded in 1851, with only a weather-board building as the church. When they built the beautiful bluestone church that currently stands, the priest resided in the side chapel; hence the chimney. At this time, our parish stretched from Yan Yean to Healesville and the priests used to travel around by jinker (horse-drawn carriage).

It was absolutely fascinating going through the church records, with many people having to sign their wedding register with just a X, due to the illiteracy of the time. Unfortunately, some of our baptism and marriage registers went missing and for quite a few years we asked at mass if anyone had any information on them. Many years later we were informed by another priest who had resided there in the 1950's, that home brew in the cellar had exploded all over the historical



documents and the rats came and ate them!

Apparently, the home brewing priest used to also take his gun to shoot the birds that resided in the church and supposedly if you look closely there are bullet holes in the church roof.

In the early days, we were the only Catholic Church in the area and many people were married here, spent their wedding night at the Old England Hotel and went off to the Warrandyte gold fields.

Working at St John's has been a delight and many of the colleagues and parishioners are now my friends. Thank you for allowing me to relive some of those times.

To advertise your
local business
here

Please email
heidelberg.eyrie@cam.org.au

Your local finance specialist

If you are considering a new property loan, restructuring your existing mortgage or looking to release equity in your home, Pietro Sciotto can help you achieve your finance goals.

Contact **Pietro Sciotto** on 0427 700 750 or
pietrosciotto@avenuefinancial.com.au

avenue
financial

Avenue Financial ABN 92 194 525 405 is an authorised Credit Representative of Australian Finance Group Limited ABN 11 066 385 822 Australian Credit Licence Number 483507

Term Two Report

Mrs Carmel Armiento

St John's in the Community

The school plays an important role in the local community and this was demonstrated at the recent ANZAC Day Dawn Service at the Cenotaph in Heidelberg. Many St John's families joined other community groups and organisations to commemorate the 103rd anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War, an event that has gone on to shape Australia and its people. School captains Daniel and Ava represented our school by laying a wreath to acknowledge the commitment of the soldiers who fought in the war.



St John's Family Week

Catholic Education Melbourne Family Week was celebrated on Monday, 7th May as a reminder that it is within the family that we first learn to build loving connections with others, based on the deep knowledge that we are loved. As a school, we celebrated "Grandparents and Special Friends Day", with a focus on 'Buildings Connections'. The grandparents and friends enjoyed praying together, learning together, laughing together and sharing stories together. It was a very special day for both our students and our visitors.



St John's Inquiry Based Learning - the Junior Classes

Our Prep students have been finding answers to the question, What do living things need to survive? They are learning that living things have particular needs to live and grow; that the physical characteristics and behaviour of living things help them to survive and that every living thing has its own life cycle.

The Preps have observed the hatching of a butterfly from the chrysalis and the hatching of chicks from eggs. Through this engagement the students have been motivated to learn and grow in knowledge and skill, as they develop personal and social capabilities, including self-awareness and self-management.

Sacrament Commitment

Both Year 3 and Year 6 students have attended Parish weekend masses this term to share their commitment to the Sacrament of Reconciliation or the Sacrament of Confirmation with the community. This is an important step as they continue and grow in their faith journeys. We congratulate and pray for our students and their families. We are so fortunate to belong to a wonderful faith filled community led by Fr Mario.



Year 5/6 Camp

Student Reflections

The Flying Fox!

by Harry

“Adios mi amigos!” I shouted as I took the leap of faith and stepped of the platform. “WOW!” I thought to myself as the adrenalline kicked in and the next thing I knew I was flying over the stagnant lake of Camp Alexandra. I saw the ducks gliding gracefully beneath me like beautiful swans. “Eyyyyy! Harry!” my friends yelled from

their canoe as I flew passed them. It was exhilarating, seeing everything whirl past me. The blackberry bushes, the island, the canoes and the cows all gone in the blink of an eye. And just as quickly as it had started, it was finished. I stopped smoothly and Mrs. Georgiou unhooked me. I wished it could last forever, I hoped it would never end. This was an experience that I would remember forever.



What Comes Up, Must Come

Down

by Dante

As I grip the strong string weaved into a rope, the ground gets smaller and smaller. Holding the strong rope makes me feel a little safer as I'm pulled metres into the air. As I near the top a sad thought pops into my mind. What if the rope snaps while I swing and I

plummet to the ground? I can imagine my tombstone, 'Dante, killed in a tragic accident on the giant swing while attending camp.' I reach the top, everything seems so small up here. The cabins where we sleep are all packed together. It reminds me off how penguins huddle in the cold. There's an eerie silence in the air, apart from the panting from the people who pulled me up. Suddenly I'm frozen in the air. The hairs on the back of my neck jerk up. I seem to be floating, but thanks to the law

of gravity, what comes up must come down. I do come down, except it's more like hurtling down. I swing up and down like a pendulum in a dusty, old grandfather clock that is slowly being brought back to life. The world seems to blur before my eyes, I try to keep in my lunch that is creeping up through my throat. As I finally come to a stop I feel so discombobulated. Did that just happen?

Stopped?

by Olivia

My heart stops. I am free falling backwards. The wind brushes against my face, as I race down. The tree's keep getting larger and smaller, greener and greener. This giant swing is making the butterflies in my stomach very mad. Is my harness

going to give out on me? My heart is going to explode, from pumping so fast. I scream because of how much fun I am having. I go down back to the land. Then I'm back up for my second go. The mountain is as clear as a cartoon drawing. The air is fast and cold, which make me shiver. My heart stops again. I am free. This time I let my arms go free and wild.



Meringue Kisses

Dainty, delicate and delicious



Ingredients

- 2 egg whites
- 110g caster sugar
- A few drops pink food colouring
- 2 tablespoons of pouring cream
- 90g white eating chocolate, chopped finely
- 4 fresh or thawed frozen raspberries

Have a favourite recipe you would like to see featured on this page?

Please send a photo of your savoury or sweet dish, along with the recipe to

heidelberg.eyrie@cam.org.au

Method

1. Preheat oven to 120°C. Grease oven trays; line with baking paper.
2. Beat egg whites, sugar and colouring in a small bowl with electric mixer for about 10 minutes or until sugar is dissolved.
3. Spoon mixture into piping bag fitted with 2cm fluted tube and pipe onto trays. Bake meringues about 50 mins or until dry to touch. Cool on trays.
4. Meanwhile, bring cream to the boil in a small saucepan. Remove from heat; add chocolate, stir until smooth. Push raspberries through a fine sieve over a bowl to make raspberry puree; need about two teaspoons. Stir raspberry puree into chocolate with a few drops of pink food colouring. Refrigerate 20 minutes or until filling is spreadable.
5. Join meringues with the raspberry puree.

~Makes 20~

Fr Robert
Francis
Coghlan



2nd April 1938 – 24 March 2018

Fr Robert “Bob” Francis Coghlan PE passed away peacefully on 24th March 2018 at St John of God Hospital, Geelong just short of his 80th birthday.

Fr Bob was ordained at St Patrick’s Cathedral on 24th July 1965 by Archbishop Simonds and has given priestly witness for over 52 years serving as Assistant Priest at the parishes of Geelong, South Yarra, Cheltenham, Gardenvale and Mitcham, as Administrator of Balwyn North, Lilydale and Hampton Park. He served as Parish Priest of Heidelberg (1979), Spotswood (1984), West Melbourne (1989), Healesville (1995) and Ringwood (2004). Due to his declining health he retired in 2006 as Pastor Emeritus initially living independently, then at George Maher House and more recently at Mercy Place Rice Village.

Throughout his ministry, Father Bob endeavoured to serve his people faithfully. He found his involvement in Catholic Charismatic Renewal in 1970’s provided a new encounter with the Risen Lord which brought focus to his personal life and the lives to those he ministered. He enjoyed liturgical music and receiving great pleasure through his involvement with Church choirs.

Fr Coghlan contributions to our parish included:

- *The commencement of Heidelbergcare - an ongoing well respected group in our parish
 - *The foresight to encourage the writing of our parish history. A valuable book written and researched by Eileen Vaughan which depicts our colourful parish over the years
 - Restoration of the original bell of our church
 - *Enhancement of the beautifully carved altar with lighting
 - *Bringing music into our mass celebrations
 - *Removing the old confessional at the rear of the church and adding more seating.
- His personal health brought him challenges along the way, but this never impeded his desire to respond to the care of his people. While a quiet man by personality, he had a wonderful sense of humour and quick wit. He was a kind and charitable man whose generosity will be remembered by all who met him.

Voices from the loft

Music Ministry at St John's

The Church encourages us to play and sing as part of the liturgy. The Catechism calls the musical tradition of the Church a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. St Augustine is often quoted as saying that one who sings is in fact praying twice; one is praying with words as well as with his singing.

At St John's we are privileged to have a number of parishioners who volunteer to lead us in singing as we meet every Sunday.

Our liturgies start with our vigil Mass on Saturday evening. For a long time Sr Loreto and Rafael Zebrowski have been leading us at this celebration. Sr Loreto is well known for her giftedness on the organ and Rafael leads with his singing.

Our 8:30am Mass does not currently feature any live music. Over the years we were lucky to have Bernadette Caddy with her guitar leading us once a month, unfortunately Bernadette could no longer carry this ministry in our parish. Michael and Brianna Chesser visit us on the first Sunday of the month. Michael and Brianna also share their musical talent at St Patrick's Cathedral.

This choir was established in 1994 with Toni Zeolla as the choir mistress. Since then some have joined the 'heavenly choir': Patrick

Gill, Pat Heywood, Joan McCarthy, Helen McGuinness, Colleen Morgan, Joan Pinkney, Bernadette Shepherdson, and notably Jim Lanigan. Everyone liked to stand near Jim as his beautiful strong voice took you with him.



Every Sunday, at the 10:30 Mass, one of our choirs leads the music. Many parishioners have been part of this choir over the almost thirty years of its existence. Today the choir is made up of Irene Baird, Maria Bechelli, Maureen Howard, Elnora Martin, Mary Mills, Aileen Powell, Françoise Touissant and Julie Underwood. Ronnie Maloney is the choir mistress while Sr Loreto and Tricia Seymon play the organ. In the past, Rosie Vaughan and Peter Farley have also been part of the choir.

The social life of the choir extends past 10:30 Mass. They have celebrated wonderful times together, remembering birthdays and sharing coffee at Leo's after Mass while sharing joys and sorrows and attempting to solve the world's problems!

Another choir took off a few years ago to lead music at the 5:00pm Mass. Initially Maria La Civita used to lead the singing on her own; eventually a choir grew around this initiative with Lydia Selvajah playing the organ, Rafael Zebrowski leading the singing, and Amanda and Andrea, Lydia's daughters, Terrance her husband, Renato and Rosemary Vecchies, Margaret Hansen and Maria La Civita. Henenka, Antonina and Dominika Pasztetnik also contributed to this choir in the past.

Christmas, Easter and First Communion celebrations require a greater effort. Sr Loreto tries very hard to organise music for these celebrations, often calling on other parishioners to join us.

We thank all involved in this sacred ministry. Our music ministry always requires new blood. Both our choirs are delighted to accept new members into their ranks. Please feel free to stroll up to the choir loft and introduce yourself. Great artistic talent is not a requirement! The parish would also be grateful for any parishioners who could offer music at our 8:30am Mass on a more regular basis.

Baptism

Stanly and Cecily Devasia

The New Year began with a very special blessing, we had the joy of watching our daughter Marianne being baptised on the very first day of 2018. Our baby was born in November, she is our fourth bundle of joy, she is blessed to have two elder brothers, Ryan and Chris and a sister Clare.

Marianne was born preterm and had to be in Special Care Unit for some days, even during her stay in hospital our only concern was to get her baptised. My husband and I were brought in Catholic faith and through experience have learnt that religious sacraments are sacred for life. The sacraments make you feel closer to God; they make God visible and fill you with the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is the first sacrament and symbolic of starting a new life in Christ. To the Catholic Church, original sin isn't a personal sin of the unborn, but a sin transmitted from generation to generation by birth. All men and women are born with original sin, and only Baptism can wash it away. Baptism can be regarded as a vaccine against sin. In the Catholic Church, infants are baptised to welcome them into the Catholic faith and to free them from original sin. The Catechism states that "Through Baptism we are freed from sins and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made shares in her mission" (CCC 1213).

The essence of the Holy Spirit received during baptism is with us throughout our life. The baptismal ceremony is filled with sacred and meaningful symbols that adds to the essence of the sacred presence received during baptism. Everything about the ceremony from the priest clothes to the words said and hymns sung encapsulate the sacramentality of the event.

The white dress worn symbolises purity of faith and cleansing power of Baptism. Galatians 3;27-You were baptised into union with Christ, and now you are clothed, so to speak with the life of Christ himself. Through Baptism, God enables us to participate in his life in Jesus Christ and makes us his children. It is through this sacrament that we receive the Holy Spirit and become members of people of God, of the Body of Christ.

Baptism becomes our commitment to grow in this new life and to strive to acquire spiritual maturity. Through baptism we are immersed in faith and as we grow in age our faith also should grow.

Our kids were very excited to watch the Baptism of their baby sister. It was even more special to celebrate the sacrament with families and friends. It was also the time to reflect on our own baptism and pray to live a regenerated life.



Fr Mario Zammit

Parish Priest, St John's Heidelberg

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St John's Catholic Parish Community,

Last year in Australia we went through the discussion of whether same-sex unions should be allowed and what shape these should take. At that stage I refrained from making any comments on the subject; now that the issue is settled, I feel I can share my thoughts.

At its basis marriage, defined as the union between two individuals, is a social institution. Over the millennia societies felt it was necessary to protect the relationship between males and females as a way of protecting their own future. Approved social unions protected against promiscuity and provided for the protection of adults and of children. In patriarchal societies, unmarried women and widows lived in poverty as they had no male to protect and provide for them. There have been and still are different forms of unions; polygamy is admitted in some cultures; one example of this is witnessed in the second book of Samuel in the Old Testament (2Sam 5:13), King David is reported to have both wives and concubines.

Different cultures had different rules regulating unions. Some unions were pre-arranged by families, at times when the parties were still minors. Other unions were agreed upon to satisfy the political needs of clans, tribes and nations. Often married

“The official recognition of same-sex unions is a social necessity.”

couples lived with either set of parents, forming an extended family (Genesis 2:24). Within this context the basic role of the parents was to give life to newer members of society; the upbringing was left to the extended family, clan or tribe.

One of the effects of the industrial revolution was a greater dependence on smaller nuclear families, composed of the partners and their children; but even this model was not necessarily always the rule. When one of the partners died or left the family home, we ended up with one parent families. More recently, with a high percentage of marriage breakdowns, we often find people in second or third marriages, thereby becoming step-parents to their partner's children.

In recent decades, the emphasis in marriage relationships has shifted. People are enjoying longer lives, introducing the new experience of the 'empty nest.' Unions are no longer entered into for political reasons or simply to provide for the upbringing of children; the relationship between the partners taken the foreground. Once we allow for

this important shift, it is easy to understand the reality of women and men wanting to come together as a way to sustain their relationships, giving rise to same-sex unions.

I believe that the official recognition of same-sex unions is a social necessity. Heterosexual couples who have chosen to commit themselves to each other have claims to certain rights that were being denied to same-sex couples. In some cases a woman and a man who have been living together in a relationship that resembles marriage, acquire some benefits usually associated with marriage. This same arrangement has not been extended to two men or two women who chose to live together because they loved and respected each other and considered themselves to be a human union. When the discussion was going on, I was amazed at the fact that some of the speakers expressed that they wanted for themselves some of the basic tenets of the institution of marriage, like stability and mutual respect.

Religion was brought into the discussion; I suggest this muddied the water. I understand that most religions will struggle to approve of same-sex unions or marriages, but there are people in our society for whom this social arrangement is important and has to be allowed.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 8th August

Feast of St Mary of the Cross Mackillop

Sunday 12th August

Sacrament of Confirmation at
St Patrick's Cathedral at 2pm

Wednesday 15th August

Assumption of Our Lady; masses
9:15am, 2:30pm (school), 7pm

Saturday 25th August

Serve the Servers Movie Night after 6pm
mass

13th & 14th October

Presentation of Communion candidates
at weekend masses

18th & 25 October and 1st November

Parish Seminar

Saturday 10th November

Sacrament of First Eucharist

The Eyrie

OUR TEAM

Editorial • Kevin Andrews

Content • Emma Daly

Content • Michelle Penson

Content • Margaret Ferma

Design & Layout • Margherita Bechelli

Printer • Peter Burke

YOUR FEEDBACK WELCOME

heidelberg.eyrie@cam.org.au

52 Yarra Street, Heidelberg 3084