

The Eyrie

St John's Catholic Parish Heidelberg



The Jose De Piro Kabataan Orchestra Concerts

Vanessa Javier

Kumusta!

The parish hosted The Jose De Piro Kabataan Orkestra on Saturday 15th June, at the Our Lady of Mercy College Theatre. The charismatic Our Lady MC's, stated the orchestra would play various pieces from stage and screen. The Australian and Philippine National Anthems, sung by bilingual pupil, Michael Lapina, from Thomas Carr College in Tarniet, opened the night where audience members could begin to experience the talent of the orchestra and OLMC Choir and ensemble.

The conductor in training (Fr Mario) did a "good" job according to my 8year old and my other young daughter loved the string section, especially the violins, when they began playing Disney classics, like "How far I'll go" from Moana and Pirates of the Caribbean. Some skilled orchestra members stood to play solo's, which was well received. The oohs and ahh's of the audience when the double base twirled, showcased the talent of these young musicians under the guidance of Maestro Cito Felecito.

It was a truly awe inspiring cross-cultural team effort for a great

charitable event, in honour of this group of young adults from the Philippines. So much so, many guests did not want to leave the theatre with audience participation encouraged by the Brass section.

As a parish, prior to the show, we provided a "flavors from home" dinner of rice and bbq meat skewers, for orchestra members and other supporting parish connections. This coordinated food was based on donations and volunteer support from our local community. If you would like to financially donate to this cause, please contact the parish and we look forward to welcoming the orchestra back again in 2020.

Mabuhay!



Michelle Penson

St John's Parishioner

I believe the role of women in the church today is truly valued and growing in importance.

I grew up in the middle of seven children with loving parents who were devoted to family and faith. I was taught I could be and do anything I set my mind to and that faith and love played a big part in that. The seven of us were all very different and the four girls were always considered equals with the boys. My three sisters, (like myself, I am told), are determined, capable and caring. We all strongly believe our input and contributions into our families, our faith, our community and in the lives we live are valuable and of worth.

Like my own parents who put so much into their parish in Sydney for so many years we have many older women in our parish who continue to put in so much of themselves in time, prayer, caring and volunteering. Many of them started their journeys in our parish when they had children at school. They joined in serving on school and parish groups and on committees helping out and doing their bit to build our parish and school into a strong community. Later in life, many of them support each other when their spouses have been sick or dying. They listen, console and give practical support and prayer. They built networks that they still enjoy and those networks are still a vital and vibrant part of their living of life in the parish.

Today most women work full time, some part time, have demanding careers, care for children, a husband/partner, sometimes caring for frail parents as well; just getting through each day can be a challenge. Finding time to serve the parish in some way is not easy, but if you take a look at the rosters, groups and committees of our parish you will see that women do continue to put themselves forward and say "yes" to the Lord in serving our parish and the wider community.

Whatever contribution, commitment we can put into our parish life we gain threefold in return. Our priests and bishops are there to listen as well as to preach and teach just as Christ did. As we go on our forward journey each one of us is called to follow Christ in the living of our faith in our daily lives. We can and should put our views forward and the church is listening and receptive to our voices. We need to be an example for our younger generations so that they can see and know the value of leading, being involved, and enjoy the sharing of faith.

The church today is said to be journeying on rocky ground and our beliefs are challenged. Women rise to face many challenges through life, none greater than nurturing the faith of a young child and through adolescence to adulthood. The building blocks of our future society, community and church are our children and grandchildren.



Getting Christ's message of faith, hope and love into them is what we must say "yes" to..... and the greatest of these messages is LOVE.

Michelle Penson grew up in the Sutherland Shire, Sydney and was taught by the Presentation Sisters, then trained as a Registered Nurse and spent four years in Papua New Guinea before moving to Rosanna and St John's Parish in the mid 70's. Married to Peter for 48 years with three super adult children and five grandchildren aged 2-17 years. Occupation- Aged Care Consultant, past Mayor of City of Heidelberg and recycled in various roles in the parish a number of times! Shared interests with Peter of family, faith, footy (Richmond), travel, classical music, opera, politics and community.

We respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri People and their Elders past and present, the traditional custodians of this land 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.

A reflection on our Parish Mission

Moira De Cesare

St John's and surrounding Parishes held their parish mission at the end of May. There were to be three sessions, each presented both during the day at St Pius X and in the evening at St Clements. The program looked interesting but I was particularly busy that week (as we all are!), so I was unsure if I could afford the time to go. I had heard from a couple of people that the speaker was excellent so I decided to make the extra effort and attend. I am so very glad that I did!

Monday morning saw me making my way into St Pius X for Session One which was to begin with mass. There was a real sense of community and joint purpose apparent as we gathered. The church was, if not overflowing, at least pleasantly full and people from all five parishes were introducing themselves to each other and chatting as we waited for mass to begin. It was a very fitting way to start the mission and lovely to attend a morning mass where the responses were given with such gusto; there was a real sense of the congregation being involved. After mass, where we nearly ran out of communion, we made our way to the hall where we nearly ran out of chairs. As both Fr Wayne and Fr Richard said, a very auspicious start to the mission!

Fr Richard Leonard is a Jesuit priest with a very extensive resume both academically and professionally, as listed on the mission flyer. He is sought all over the world as a speaker on aspects of life, faith and theology. What was not mentioned in the flyer is that he is a



consummate story teller. Each session wove various threads of his and others lives and experiences together to give a poignantly real insight into the aspect of faith that he was addressing.

The first session was about Catholic Tradition and how to make it relevant for our lives. Using the doctrine of Mary as an example Fr Richard looked at the reality behind the tradition. In this session he told a story about a group of Chilean mothers which I would never be able to do justice to but it touched a chord in me. Those women in such a horrendous situation were able to find solace and strength through Mary. This helped me to reclaim for myself a vision of Mary who is truly relatable to me. A Mary who is real and present in the difficult times.

I wasn't able to attend St Pius for the second session so I headed off to St Clement's in the evening. While the sense of community and good will was still very much in evidence I have to admit that I missed the

opportunity to start with mass. This session, which looked at the choices that we make in life, was every bit as relevant and real as the first. Drawing on the life and teaching of Ignatius Loyola and the life of a Sydney sex worker, Fr Richard examined how we can use our Christian spirituality to help us make better choices.

The last session reflected on the difficulty that we can have finding God in the really tough times. When something terrible happens we can find ourselves asking "why has God done this?" This type of thinking leaves us with a God who punishes. Through sharing the experiences of his family after an accident which left his sister a quadriplegic, Fr Richard was able instead to lead us to an image of God who instead is right there suffering with us.

It was a real privilege to attend the parish mission and I wish that I could recreate the experience for those of you who weren't able to attend. There are recordings of similar talks that Fr Richard has given available on You Tube and I would highly recommend them. While I won't always remember the exact theological doctrine or message that Fr Richard was addressing, the stories that he told will stay with me forever. In a very real way they were able to cut through the intellectual aspect of the theology and find the heart and meaning within that we can take and apply to our everyday lives.

Bringing our gifts to the table

Kate Garrone, Faith and Mission Leader, Our Lady Of Mercy College



As a Catholic woman I bring to the table my experience of being a married woman, a mother of three children, a psychologist, teacher and spiritual director. In my role of leading Faith and Mission at Our Lady of Mercy College I am privileged to work in a vibrant Catholic school community that is educating and forming young women. It is my hope that we are forming young people who can step out into the world as confident and engaged citizens who are willing and able to contribute to our world and who can draw from the life-giving traditions of their Catholic faith to do this. I believe our Catholic faith supports our development as intelligent and compassionate human beings and it provides opportunities to engage with our heads, hearts and hands. Our faith compels us to use our skills and talents to act for justice; love with a

radicalness that is disarming, transformative and healing; and to nurture an intimate relationship with God that will sustain us on our journey through life.

Participation in the life and mission of our Catholic Church takes many forms including those in local parishes and also in so many Catholic organisations that form part of the Church's work in and for our world. Indeed many Catholics work outside of these institutions as well and do so with a real sense of putting their faith into action. Women's contribution is enormous in parish life and in areas of the Church's mission. In the context of secularising society and in the aftermath of the Royal Commission it is undoubtedly a challenging time to be Catholic. We hold a huge responsibility to reform our structures and practices that enabled

and allowed abusive behaviour to occur so that they will not occur again. We have treasures in our faith that offer hope and direction, but there is also much that needs to be called into question and reformed, particularly in the institutional structures of the Church. Joan Chittister, a Benedictine nun, has for 40 years passionately advocated on behalf of peace, human rights, women's issues and church renewal suggests:

"It is clear now, in ways it was never clear before, how much damage is done to the church itself, ironically, by the kind of silence that makes it impossible for the church to admit its weaknesses, to deal with its questions, to heal its wounds. The determination to avoid scandal by denying it has become the biggest scandal of them all... It is even clearer now that the whole church is not best served by having its theology, its administration and its judgments determined by only the smallest part of it. By excluding from its decision-making inner circles the very people who are best equipped, most prepared to deal with the issues assailing it in this new world, is to cut itself off again from the scientists who could have saved it from the Galileo debacle and the scripture scholars who could have saved it from literalism and the social scientists who could have saved it from racism and the women who could have saved it from sexism....Now we have nothing left to do but be church together - laity and clergy, women and men, old and young, weak, sinful, forgiving, caring and honest about the challenges that face us every day."

A Litany of Women for the Church

In being church together the role and contribution of everyone must be brought to light. It is clear that the structures that exclude the voice and gifts of women in our church, particularly relating to sacraments and to the decision making structures within the church which specifically exclude women, need to change. There is a need for wholeness and for all people's gifts to be celebrated. In a Church that specifically excludes lay women and men from roles of leadership where their voices can be heard, and their contribution can be fully celebrated, we are now in a time to examine this and I hope, listen deeply and look to actually see what is being offered. It is a time when we desperately need to be in conversation about women's role in the Church, that celebrates their contribution and widens their opportunity to do so. I hold these questions in prayer at this time and invite you to join me in doing the same:

How can the gifts of all people be acknowledged, celebrated and given the opportunity to flourish in our Catholic communities?

How can women take the place alongside men with dignity and without apology?

How can our community grow, question, face doubt, be unafraid of difference and diversity and respond to Jesus' call to love at this time?

How do we support in our Church authentic leadership that is transformative and empowering and that is deeply rooted in personal transformation?

How do we become a welcoming and inclusive community where no one is turned away?

How does spirituality support social justice and social inclusion?

Dear God, creator of women in your own image,
born of a woman in the midst of a world half women,
carried by women to mission fields around the globe,
made known by women to all the children of the earth,
give to the women of our time
the strength to persevere,
the courage to speak out,
the faith to believe in you beyond all systems and institutions
so that your face on earth may be seen in all its beauty,
so that men and women become whole,
so that the church may be converted to your will in everything and in all ways.

We call on the holy women who went before us,
channels of Your Word in testaments old and new,
to intercede for us so that we might be given the grace to become what they have been for the honor and glory of God.

Saint Esther, who pleaded against power for the liberation of the people,

Saint Judith, who routed the plans of men and saved the community,

Saint Deborah, laywoman and judge, who led the people of God,

Saint Elizabeth of Judea, who recognized the value of another woman,

Saint Mary Magdalene, minister of Jesus, the first evangelist of the Christ,

Saint Scholastica, who taught her brother Benedict to honor the spirit above the system,

Saint Hildegard, who suffered interdict for the doing of right,

Saint Joan of Arc, who put no law above the law of God,

Saint Clare of Assisi, who confronted the pope with the image of woman as equal,

Saint Julian of Norwich, who proclaimed for all of us the motherhood of God,

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, who knew the call to priesthood in herself,

Saint Catherine of Siena, to whom the pope listened,

Saint Teresa of Avila, who brought women's gifts to the reform of the church,

Saint Edith Stein, who brought fearlessness to faith,

Saint Elizabeth Seton, who broke down boundaries between lay women and religious

by wedding motherhood and religious life,

Saint Dorothy Day, who led the church in a new sense of justice,

Mary, mother of Jesus, who heard the call of God and answered,

Mary, mother of Jesus, who drew strength from the woman Elizabeth,

Mary, mother of Jesus, who underwent hardship bearing Christ,

Mary, mother of Jesus, who ministered at Cana,

Mary, mother of Jesus, inspirited at Pentecost,

Mary mother of Jesus, who turned the Spirit of God into the body and blood of Christ, pray for us.

Amen.

— Joan Chittister, OSB

Mrs Maureen Stella, Principal



How you see the position of women in the church today?

The position of women in the church today is an interesting one as women have played a part in the church and have been great leaders over the years. I think back to the women of faith like St Joan of Arc, Mother Teresa, St Clare of Assisi, Mary Glowrey, St Mary Mackillop and of course, St Mary Magdalene and Mary, Mother of God. All of these women were strong, dedicated, and influential and lived their lives as spirit filled people.

When I think of women in the church, I go back to the past with my upbringing in the country. I grew up in Echuca and my primary education was at St Mary's Primary School and my secondary education was at St Joseph's College, Echuca, before I came to Melbourne to attend university at Christ College in Chadstone. The past informed my future in that the Brigidine nuns played a significant role in leading through Catholic education and influenced me, from the early age of eight to become a Catholic school teacher.

My memories of these nuns were very positive ones and as I was a boarder at secondary school, I had the opportunity to see the nuns both within and outside of school hours. I recall the nuns as educators, cooks, gardeners, musicians and caring for the poor. To me, as a young girl, they contributed, along with my family, to my faith education. In my eyes, they were strong, independent and courageous women with a very strong sense of social justice. I have the utmost respect and admiration for these women who had a big impact on my adult life.

In our faith communities today, women play an ever increasing role in hospitals, schools, parish ministries and in numerous social justice endeavours, however I believe that their voices need to be heard, alongside the current male clergy. I would like to see women play a greater role in the church today, especially when it comes to decision making and active participation.

What is your contribution in the church today?

My contribution today as a Principal in a Catholic school, is to work closely with the Parish Priest to promote the links between school and parish. At St John's, I assist in leading a community of faith, in partnership with Fr Mario, with a commitment to personal, spiritual and professional growth.

An open invitation is given to all members of the St John's community to participate in the liturgical and spiritual life of the school. This involves prayer, Christian Meditation, class Year Level and whole school masses, retreats, as well as liturgies. I see my role as working in collaboration with Fr Mario and my staff to promote the Catholic identity of our school. At a recent school tour,

the news about clerical abuse had been in the media and I addressed this in my presentation, by acknowledging the pain and hurt experienced by many and assuring the prospective parents that the safety and wellbeing of our students was at the heart of all we do, from our school and parish perspective.

I believe it is important to provide opportunities for dialogue about our Catholic faith and a tool I use for this is, "Community Conversations". Questions are presented to the group and people are invited to respond, with no right or wrong answer and without judgement. This enables all voices to be heard and for us to acknowledge and respect differing opinions. These dialogue opportunities occur in Student, Staff, Leadership, School Advisory Council and Parish Pastoral Council meetings.

I was fortunate to participate in a Catholic Education Melbourne program "Enhancing Catholic School Identity" in 2016 in Leuven, Belgium. This educational program further enhanced my understandings of the importance of dialogue and providing others with the opportunities to speak about what matters most, in their hearts as well as their minds. Last year, I facilitated the involvement of my staff in going through the process of giving their thoughts and suggestions for the first stage of the Plenary Council-Listening and Dialogue. It was an important opportunity to talk and listen together about our experiences of faith, life and the Church, in responding to the question "What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?"

Continued on next page...

St John's School Ball

Thursday 20th June, 2019



“The Foundation statement, Leadership in a Catholic School CEM (Catholic Education Melbourne) is a guide for leaders and one which inspires me in “nurturing an environment of trust, one that invites dialogue and challenges everyone”. Regardless of gender, the challenge for leaders is to be “inspired by the gospel and led by the Holy Spirit to bring God’s love to the world. Filled with the hope of Christ, they are committed to action for justice and peace, in their school community and beyond and in promoting the common good.” This can be a challenge in the secular world in which we live and yet my experience leads me to believe that we all have

so much in common and the desire to reconnect with our faith.

What would you like the church to look like in the future?

I would like to see more women having a voice in church leadership and the church community listening and dialoguing more with others and welcoming a diversity of voices. The church needs to be a place of welcome for all. Families of all descriptions, need to be warmly embraced and encouraged to participate in the faith journey. Pope Francis has spoken of the need to engage in the world and respond in faith. The Plenary Council is a step in the right direction and it will be

interesting to hear the outcomes of this council meeting in 2020, which is focusing on the future of the Catholic Church in Australia and what we are called to do, who we are called to be and how do we need to change?

With this in mind, I wonder how the laity will be involved in the church in the future. We are entering interesting times and in the words of Pope Francis, “The role of women in the church must not be limited to being mothers, workers, a limited role... No! It is something else”.

Faye Taouk

When I think about "woman", I instinctively think of "The Virgin Mary". Our Mother Mary has been a symbol of godliness and strength and a role model for mothers everywhere. Her role is pinnacle in the church as the Mother of God and the Mother of the church. She embodies the qualities that we need to aspire to such as unwavering faith, humility, submissiveness to God, sacrifice and upmost loyalty and devotion as a mother to a child.

Having this moral and spiritual figure to look up to, I feel comforted and blessed to have Mother Mary as a guide to lead me on the journey through motherhood. Now more than ever, the role of the mother within the church has reached significant challenges. Upholding traditional values and keeping the faith in Christ is paramount to the survival of the church for the future. For this reason, the role of the mother (just as the role of the Virgin Mary) is indispensable in the church.



As a mother of four young children, I face these challenges daily. I aspire for my children to have a foundation of faith in Christ that is strong and unbreakable. Despite any hardship they may endure in their lives, I pray that they will stay connected to God and always be devoted to their faith.

I was raised by devout catholic parents. My mother dedicated her life to her children and successfully instilled continual faith in us. In a world where this almost feels impossible, how did she do this? She was simultaneously devoted to her faith and to her children. She prayed with us daily and she taught us about God. Her teachings were consistent. My goal is to emulate my mother and Mother Mary. I achieve this by taking my children to church every week and celebrating the sacraments of the church, through daily prayer and by ongoing dialogue about God and the churches traditions.

Finally, in the words of his holiness; "without mothers, not only would there be no new people of faith, but the faith would lose a good portion of its simple and profound warmth". "It's the mothers role to plant and cultivate the seed of faith in a child."

<p>KUMON</p> <p>Tailored Learning. Endless Discoveries.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>KUMON HEIDELBERG EDUCATION CENTRE 187 Burgundy Street Instructor: Maureen Hegarty Tel: 0423 877 736</p> <p>http://au.kumonglobal.com</p> 	<p>Planning a funeral? We understand your needs</p> <p>The Lonergan & Erbacher families have a long association with St. John's Catholic Parish</p> <p>LONERGAN & RAVEN EST. 1849 FUNERAL DIRECTORS</p> <p>contact Robert Erbacher: 0408 179 553 or our Clifton Hill office: 03 9489 8711 for an obligation-free quote</p> <p>www.ravensfunerals.com.au</p>	<p>143 Lower Plenty Road Rosanna T. 9459 4933 159 Burgundy Street Heidelberg T. 9458 1555</p> <p>sales@meridiantravel.com.au meridiantravel.com.au</p> <p>ESCAPE EXPLORE DREAM DISCOVER</p> <p>meridian travel & cruise</p> <p>ATAS travel accredited</p>
--	---	---

Erin Manuel

I moved to Australia in 2010 from Hong Kong and the first Sunday in the country, my aunt made me try being an altar server in the Parish and for seven years I devoted myself to altar serving every Sunday. Then eventually also becoming Communion Minister for a short time.

From early times, there has been a huge gap between the role of Men and Women within the Church. The Church was heavily male-dominated, roles of importance and leadership were exclusively for men and there was a lack of recognition of Women's rights within the Church.

The vast majority of Women's voices weren't heard or acknowledge by The Church community as it was Male dominant. Even back in Hong Kong, the church I attended didn't allow for girls to become altar servers. However, with the changing times, the concept of equality between the genders being brought to light, society has begun to take steps allowing women to stand next to men as equals with the same rights and opportunities without discrimination because of their gender.



I'm glad to see that this has extended to The Church community as well. I feel blessed to be able to have the opportunities to participate within this church community in a variety of roles and have education from Our ladies of Mercy College which allowed me to feel empowered as a female in the Catholic setting. Being able to partake roles such as altar serving

allowed me to feel closer to The Church Community as well as to God. It delights me, even more, when I see young girls or females taking initiative in the Catholic community.

Earlier in April, when I saw the news that Pope Francis had published in a document in which he stated that the youth of the community must be attentive to women's "legitimate claims" for equality and justice, made me feel excited. The first step in rectifying a problem is to first acknowledge that the problem exists and the fact that Pope Francis has recognised this, is huge. I hope The Catholic Community can continue on its paths of enabling proper justice for Women's rights.

I am currently a second-year university student at The Royal Melbourne Institute, studying a Bachelor of Legal and Dispute Study. I am also a part of the the RMIT Japan Club executive team. In the future I hope to traverse the world and after my degree work in the legal field.

Stephens

GRASS FED FREE RANGE FAMILY RUN

Warringal Shopping Centre

Open 7 days 6am-7pm



With Respects Catering

withrespects.com.au

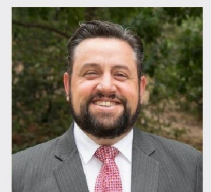
37 Greville Rd Rosanna 3084
T: 0422 038 817 ABN: 81870746819

FLETCHERS

THOMAS BECHELLI
Director & Auctioneer

114 Lower Plenty Road, Rosanna
thomas.bechelli@fletchers.net.au
m 0413 181 461 | t 9430 1133

fletchers.net.au



Contributing to the
Communities we serve.

Aislinn Ryan

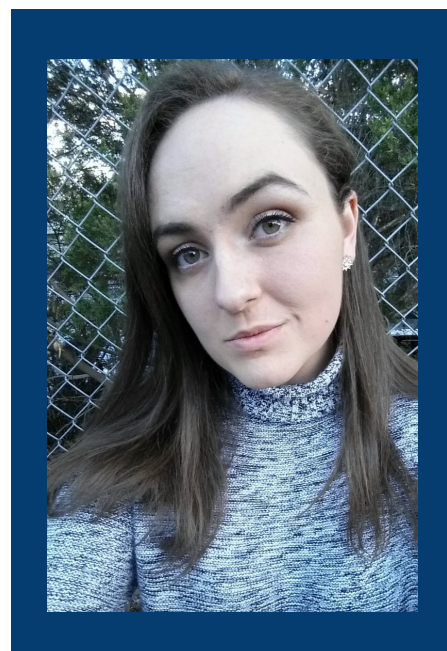
I have always admired the community-driven nature of the Catholic faith. Coming together every Sunday to celebrate a mutual faith in God and in each other is a truly admirable practice, and that sense of community is something that we, as a wider society, should definitely seek to emulate. This community only truly flourishes when everybody has a role, and from the priest leading the service to the congregant quietly praying in the back pews of the church, each and all of these roles are valued and important.

As a young girl being raised a Catholic, I was given many outstanding female role models both within the church's history and in my local community. As a child, I was given a book full of female saints to read, and quickly developed an admiration for Joan of Arc, whose name I later chose as my confirmation name. How incredible that in the 15th century, God would call upon a thirteen-year-old girl to lead the French army in battle. This is something that, as I age, I can still barely fathom. We researched Joan of Arc (or Jeanne d'Arc) in French during my VCE studies. In my year 12 French oral exam when asked about my reaction to Joan's incredible feats

of faith and heroism, I replied with full honesty, saying "Si j'avais entendue les voix divines, je n'aurais pas répondu." This translates to "If I had heard the voice of God, I would not have responded!" Often, when reading tales of incredible saints and their amazing acts of faith, I was left slightly intimidated, but always in wonder.

The female role models far closer to home were the incredible volunteers and worshippers that I saw every week around me. I remember being thoroughly disappointed the first time Mum told me I was too old to go to Children's Liturgy, and I would miss out on Sr Loreto and her wonderful explanations and retellings of scripture. As an altar helper, it was the work of Carlene which was so helpful as I tried to navigate my first Easter and Christmas services. And Sunday mass at 10:30 was always a highlight, as we rushed to the parish hall to see what delicacies the ladies doing morning tea had prepared for us this week.

Admittedly, I haven't returned to church in a long time, and am still trying to work out my place in the wider faith community. But these



memories of community, faith and belonging still impact my everyday life, my decisions and my actions, and I am very grateful to the women who showed me this way throughout my younger life. I hope that these women will continue to share their experience and faith with the Catholic community, and potentially move to be involved in other facets of church life in the coming decades.

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

Fr Mario

Parish Priest, St John's Heidelberg

“History has often been written from a male perspective, often failing to give due importance to the role of women.”

It is an honour for me to be the only male contributing in this 'special edition' of our parish magazine as we reflect on the role of women in the Church today and into the future. I thank all who have accepted to share their perspective on this very topical discussion. In this reflection I look at the role of women through the centuries and the way the Church as an institution looks at this.

'Church' is human and divine. Its divine aspect is in the coming together of people (*in Greek: ecclesia*) who believe in God and who come together to worship as a community of faith; it is human in its organisational structure. While the divine is the 'source and summit' of the belief and activities of the People of God (Lumen Gentium 14), the rules governing the institution are not God-given but modelled on western society. After the freedom given to Christianity by the Roman Emperor Constantine (313 AD), the institution took over many aspects of that empire.

Along the centuries humanity has experienced a few societies ruled by women (matriarchies), and a large number of societies dominated by males (patriarchies). If we look at our western culture we note that history has often been written from a male perspective, often failing to give due importance to the role of women. Today we still discuss whether there are enough women in politics; until very recently, royalty was inherited down the male line, with females only admitted when no male was available. In modern Australia we still

have only a handful of female leaders!

Today we have learnt to question this lack of women in leadership positions. Some have proposed targets and quotas to ensure equal representation of both women and men, recognising that each contribute a different perspective to life and society. Our Church is caught up in this very important discussion. Where are the women in our Church? Some Christian denominations have allowed women to take up positions of leadership, admitting them to the ordination as deacons, priests and bishops; other denominations still find it difficult to move in this direction. Apart from the Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Churches still allow only males to be ordained to ministry.

The books of the bible and the history of the Church mention a number of women who left an indelible mark in the history of the People of God and the Church. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) and Theresa of Avila (1515-1582) have been recognised as Doctors (teachers) of the Church. Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997), Mary MacKillop (1842-1909) and Caroline Chisholm (1808-1877) have, in recent years, shown great leadership. There has certainly been no shortage of female prophetic voices strongly witnessing to the gospel values.

In the Catholic Church the question of allowing women to become deacons, priests and bishops is seen as a theological issue. The Church believes that since the twelve

apostles chosen by Jesus were all men, this indicates his preference to limit priestly ordinations only to men. Moreover, for a long time, Church leadership has been seen to be intrinsically linked to the sacrament of Holy Orders, hence the need to have male priests in crucial positions of leadership.

In recent years we have noticed a number of bishops, including Pope Francis, appointing women to positions of leadership that do not require priestly ordination. This is certainly very important as we are slowly learning to listen to the female voices in our midst. Is this enough? Will the Church ever accept to ordain women to the priesthood? I think that we have to accept that just like society struggles to place women in leadership, the Church too is slowly and gently going through the same process. I am not sure if, and when we will get to see Catholic women priests.

In the meantime, as we live in our community of faith, we need to remind ourselves that God is not female or male, and that we are all created in God's image and likeness. As Paul says: in Christ Jesus 'there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one' in him (Galatians 3:28)! God speaks and expresses Godself through each and every one of us and we all have a very important place forming the Body of Christ.

Go gently!

Mario

The Eyrie

OUR TEAM

Editorial • Michelle Penson

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

The views, thoughts and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual authors and should not be interpreted as theology or moral and ethical teaching.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday 1st August

Annointing of the Sick Masses; 9:15am and 11:30am.

Thursday 8th August

Feast day of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

Sunday 11th August

Sacrament of Confirmation at St Patrick's Cathedral at 2:30pm.

Thursday 15th August

Assumption of Our Lady—holy day of obligation. Masses at 9:15am, 12noon (school) and 7pm.

Saturday 31st August

Serve the Servers Movie Night after 6pm mass.

Sunday 1st September

Father's Day.