

The Eyrie

St John's Catholic Parish Heidelberg



Welcome to St. John's Fr Vinh

Fr. Vinh Nguyen was born in Vietnam in the village of Dong Phu in the Vinh Diocese and parish of Phi Loc (about 300km south of Hanoi). He is the third child in a family of nine children (5 girls and 4 boys). Fr Vinh's parents instilled a strong faith in their children and they were nurtured in the faith and encouraged in devotion to the Lord and attended daily mass. Vinh was an altar boy and says he felt his vocation even at this early stage. Fr Vinh's father wanted to be a priest but as Communism took over Vietnam he saw this was not possible and so took on the calling of marriage.

Vinh was a fine student and gained a Bachelor of Mathematics and taught secondary school for five years. He was loved by students and many asked him for tutoring not only in Maths but in Chemistry and Physics which he enjoyed. He was the first catholic teacher in the Education College.

He loved teaching and those in the communist party could see he was a leader. They tried to convert him to their ways but Vinh stayed true to his beliefs even though this cost him promotion.

Fellow Vietnamese friends were studying to be priests in Australia and knew of Vinh's wish to become a priest. He also had a cousin here Fr Anh Nguyen (now Parish Priest at Epping). Vinh wrote a letter indicating his wishes and Bishop Michael McKenna (the Rector of Corpus Christi College at the time) came from Australia to Vietnam and met with Vinh. Archbishop Hart then accepted Vinh to study for the priesthood in 2004 and he was able to come to Australia at the end of 2005.

Vinh began his studies at the Corpus Christi College in Carlton and at the Catholic Theological College in East Melbourne. Having very little English it was very difficult. Bishop Tony Ireland (the Rector of Corpus Christi College at the time) gave him lots of encouragement and suggested he do an English course at RMIT and Australian Catholic University which he did for a year and then began his formal priesthood studies in 2007.



After three years study Vinh was able to take a short holiday to see his family in Vietnam. They were thrilled that his journey to the priesthood was going so well. He spoke regularly to his parents and family on Facebook and still enjoys these catch ups with family.

(continued page 2....)

Fr Vinh was ordained to the Diaconate in 2012 and 2 weeks after this his dad became very ill. Despite travelling urgently to Vietnam, due to plane delays he did not make it back in time to see his dad one last time but his family were overjoyed that he could be with them at this time and for the funeral.

On 28 June 2014 Fr Vinh was ordained to the priesthood and his mother and a brother were able to visit Australia for this wonderful occasion.

Some weeks after his ordination Fr Vinh travelled back to Vietnam and was greeted at the airport by a large crowd. He then visited his home parish in Vietnam to say mass and the celebration, party and gathering numbered over a thousand people.

In his spare time Fr Vinh likes to play songs, music from bamboo flute (a sort of Vietnamese traditional instrument). He uses to play a lot of sports such as table tennis, badminton and tennis. He still enjoys a game

of tennis on his day off along with reading and meeting up with families and friends. Before coming to Heidelberg Fr Vinh had a number of appointments including a pastoral year placement at Frankston, then a Deacon at Bacchus Marsh and Airport West, a stint as Chaplain of St. Vincent's Hospital, Assistant Priest at Brunswick, Sunshine, Doncaster, Administrator and then Parish Priest of Yea & Alexandria before joining us here at St. John's, his new home.



A welcome Morning Tea was held in the parish hall after 10.30 Mass on Sunday July 3rd. Many came to welcome Fr Vinh and share a cuppa.

John McGrath welcomed Fr Vinh on behalf of the parish and Fr Vinh spoke about his joy of coming to Heidelberg and wishing to get to know his new flock. He asked that we give him time to learn all our names!

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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.

Fatherhood—Unconditional Love

Jason Mantello

I never knew how much I could love two people as much as I do.

The memory of holding both of my children when they were born and looking at my wife and saying no words but just in absolute disbelief of what together with the Lord we had both just created is a feeling I will never forget.



It is a different love to that of the type of love for your wife or parents. It is an amazing feeling to see two souls looking at you as their guardian angel and their mentor. Becoming a father is the most rewarding journey as I can show my children everything from my flaws to my strengths with **unconditional love**.

My role - I am very affectionate and supportive to both my children as it helps with their cognitive and social development. It has instilled a sense of well-being and self-confidence to help them back their beliefs and not be turned away from them. This is to hopefully allow them to have a better overall awareness of life around them and be able to carry this well into their journey of adulthood.

I had a great upbringing and my own parents were great role models, showing me the way and preparing me for my own journey of fatherhood.

There are highs like seeing my kids crawl and walk and then hearing them say your name for the first time - DAD! Then it sets in your mind set that yes, you are a dad now and forever more. There are lows when they are sick, and they are helpless and all they want is for you to stay home and reassure them you're there to give them that cuddle or that medicine or just sit with them until they fall asleep – although I might say, I do not mind the extra cuddles.

Without faith, love, family, life's social and sporting activities, for me, there would be nothing to work for.

My family and my work are my life. As a family, we chose to involve our children in all aspects of our life, including work which I believe has allowed my children the view of a well-balanced life which helps them to understand and manage stressful situations.

I hope our children will become compassionate as I always show them compassion when faced with challenging situations. I hope they will learn bravery as they have watched me fall but always try and try again.

While they are young and growing I hope they have learnt from me that if you are going to do something do not do it unless you put in the effort regardless of the outcome.

Well prepared—greatly unprepared!

Wayne Daniell -(Year 4 Teacher)

Becoming a Father was an event that I both prepared greatly for and was greatly unprepared for.

My 14 and 12 year old daughters, Matilda and Jemimah, were both born in the UK. I moved there from Australia for work when I was 26 and their mother was a native of Lincoln. We were married and settled down in Nottingham and within a couple of years Matilda was on her way.

We had taken anti-natal classes so we would be thoroughly drilled and prepared for our new baby. Needless to say for anyone who has been there, it was a very different story when we walked back into our house for the first time with just the four of us - Myself, my wife, Matilda and our brand new friend, 'reality'!!

My lasting memory is the feeling of how enormous it all was just hitting us like a tonne of bricks. But we survived it and so did Matilda, enjoying exclusive access to her parents for all of 22 months before Jemimah arrived.



I was determined to be a hands-on father and take on as much of the load as I could in terms of child rearing, including changing nappies, doing bath time, reading books, singing the nursery rhymes, and bedtimes. They were all moments I would at times cherish and at other times rue! But they were incredibly formative moments in my relationship with my daughters and **my advice to any young fathers has always been that a second spent with your little ones is never wasted.**

Looking back on my journey as a father, at my teenage daughters now I have nothing but the deepest love and gratitude towards them for making me the best possible version of myself.

I would love to be able to say that I have been a sterling role model for them at all times and have never made a mistake, but that would be a lie and instead.

I hope I have been able to model for them being human, embracing the ups and downs and the importance of embracing personal growth.

Any growth I make is for them, and is inspired by them. And that's why I love being their Dad, they fill my cup every single day and I am an infinitely better human because of them!

Thank you, Lord for the gift of fatherhood and thank you to my girls!

Joy - Wonderful but different

John McGrath

Becoming a grandfather was a very different experience to that of becoming a father. Wonderful, but different. Over the past twenty years my seven grand-children, so far ... have given me nothing but joy, as I watch them live the experiences of their lives.

Late July 2002 changed my world for ever ... for the better. My first grandchild was born. To date I have five beautiful granddaughters and two handsome grandsons. Their ages range from twenty to fifteen months.

When you become a father you have both the physical and mental concerns of raising your children, whilst, being heavily involved with your employment.

As a grandfather, I am consistently involved with the grandchildren's lives, but as it is limited to my visiting them or vice versa, and although the time spent with them is far less, it is with far less concerns. The difference in my age from father to grand-father was 30 years, and I was a very different man by comparison. I now have far more time to concentrate on any occasion that I may be afforded with any of the grandchildren.

I clearly remember my grandfather and without realising his involvement in my early years, he fostered the formation of traditions, in the make up of what it means to be a family and some of the standards to live by.

Pop was a firm Catholic and his example as head of the family helped create in me, my commitment to the faith. I hope to do the same with my grandchildren.

Attending the grandchildren's school performances, their sporting events and enjoying their presence at any family get-together are some of the times . I am so glad to be lucky enough to have children and grandchildren that not only love me but want to spend time with me, and be a part of my life.

Although my children have travelled the world, presently all are living and settled within the Melbourne area. Before too long the grandchildren will start to spread their wings and travel, something I will encourage, a fact that I am well aware of and even if I will find it hard to be away from them, it is a reality. Lucky for me the world of travel and technology is growing smaller.



I enjoy nothing more than to attend any after school or weekend grandchild sporting events.

It's a wonderful feeling loving my grandchildren, and I tell them often. The more I put in the more I receive and will forever seek to participate in their lives to earn their love and respect. If I am lucky enough it will continue until they put their "Poppy" to rest.

St John's Acting Principal - Ms Elizabeth Whiting

The Arts Shine at St John's Heidelberg Term 3 2022

Throughout Term 3 it has been with much joy that we have been able to come together as a community to celebrate our proud history and Catholic Identity through the Arts.

St John's School Showcase Performance On 30 and 31 August St John's students participated in our Learning Showcase Performance -

Heidelberg 'As It Was'. It was a truly successful whole school celebration of student learning and talent. Our Learning and Teaching Leader Ms Nicky Dunne wrote the script, sharing her passion for history and literature, transporting the audience across the decades. We congratulate Jeremy from Prep D whose artwork featured in the Showcase Program and promotional flyers.



Our Performing Arts teacher Belinda Collison partnered with Vassie Catalano - Studio V School of Dance (Heidelberg), developing the choreography and sourcing costumes for a dynamic and colourful performance. Belinda and Vassie's passion for performance, patient and positive encouragement and attention to detail provided our community with a captivating show. Our show commenced with the Acknowledgement of Country and our students then performed the songs from across the decades

Preps: We are family **Year 1:** 1910 Home Among The Gum Trees **Year 2:** 1920's Charleston **Year 3:** 1930's The Road To Gundagai **Year 4:** 1950's Let's Twist Again **Year 5:** 1980's Video Killed The Radio Star **Year 6:** 2020's Blinding Lights



The evening then finished with our students coming together for a 'Whole school' Song. We thank our classroom teachers, learning support officers and leaders Connie Bandiera (Acting Deputy), Melanie Sharples and Leanne Bradley in the office for supporting organisational and operational aspects of the performance.

We congratulate the main cast and those students who played the role of reporters across the decades. And finally we congratulate all students on their participation in the performance, showcasing learning, singing, dancing and acting skills. It certainly was a celebration to remember.

I extend my appreciation and thanks to Judith Weir, Principal OLMC for allowing St John's to use this magnificent facility and to Marie Jenkins, Gavin Hocking and staff for their support as we used the OLMC theatre and gym.



CONFIRMATION



Episcopal Vicar for the Eastern Region -Very Rev Anthony (Tony) Kerin JCL EV PP

St John's School—Sacrament of Confirmation

On Friday 12 August 2022 our St John's students and parish catechists gathered in the OLMC Nal-leijerring Centre where a sacred space was prepared for our celebrant Rev Fr Tony Kerin and our parish priest Fr Vinh Nguyen who celebrated this sacrament. It was a most reverent celebration with candidates, sponsors and families entering into the sacrament reverently and respectfully. Fr Tony Kerin led students in prayer and shared a homily speaking about the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Fr Tony shared that these gifts are like super powers that we call on as we build and maintain our relationship with God.

We thank Adam Salemme, Simone Porthose, Nicky Dunne, Connie Bandiera, Elizabeth Williamson, St John's parish and school administration staff for their preparation for the sacrament.



Father Vinh Nguyen and Deacon Vinh Do assist Very Rev Tony Kerrin

St John's Confirmation 2022

Family Faith Night-9th August

As a parish and school community candidates gathered to reflect in preparation for Confirmation. The evening commenced with a welcoming address by our Acting Principal Elizabeth Whiting reflecting on her own experience of Confirmation, followed by exploration of scripture, reflection of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Fr Vinh spoke, linking scripture to the sacrament and the evening finished with a closing prayer.

Class Masses

At St John's Catholic Parish Primary School we continue to build strong links and share faith experiences within our Parish community. Each Thursday morning our students continue to attend level masses in our Parish church. It is a fantastic opportunity for our students, families and parishioners to come together and share and support each other through ongoing faith formation.

We thank Fr Vinh for his ongoing support and faith leadership in guiding our school staff, students and local community.



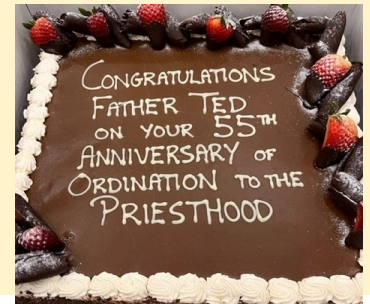
Fr Ted—55 years of service

On Sunday 24th July we joined together at the 10.30 Mass to celebrate **Fr Ted's 55th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood**. We have been truly blessed to have Fr Ted come into our lives as Parish Priest here at St. John's from 2002 to 2013.

Now as a retired priest living amongst us Fr Ted continues to give service by filling in for our Parish Priest when they go on holidays. He is till very much part of our parish and local community, a friend and minister to many. His gentle nature, quiet kind words of wisdom, and his smile are treasured and valued by many and he sees this as part of his "retired" life ministry.



After mass we celebrated with morning tea and a special cake. Joe Manovella made a speech to thank Fr Ted for his work in our parish and pass on our congratulations on 55 years of service.



From the Editor

Thank you again to our sponsors. This edition has focused on our new priest and deacon and some dads and a grandfather who kindly put pen to paper with their thoughts on fatherhood and we thank them sincerely.

In the December edition we would like some input with your best Christmas story be it an opinion piece, a catastrophe, funny, inspiring or a memory you wish to share with others. We look forward to receiving your thoughts. If unsure of how to write it then we are happy to meet with you to discuss your article. Michelle Penson

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Being a Dad = Love & Time

Matthew May

Being a dad was something I really felt the desire to pursue once I found the perfect person to have a family with. Boy was I shocked once I found out truly how much was involved! But like everything in life there are moments which challenge you; whether it could be managing kids running around a light shop, a request for McDonalds at 9am on a Saturday, or explaining why we need to go to bed before 10pm! This is contrasted by rewarding moments where your child might be a recipient of a Principal's award at school, a compliment from a shopper at Coles as we're waiting in line, or even just a knowing look and smile from another dad in the doctor's waiting room.



There are two resounding comments that have stuck with me with respect to fatherhood which I find helpful. Firstly that to everyone else you are simply someone, but for your children you are everything. I'm just a guy at my workplace, or just like every other parent at school pickup, but to Zach and Josh I've got some kind of super power which nobody else has. So that's a special feeling, and a feeling I know they only feel for me. The other comment being that **children really equate love to time**; time spent with them just hanging out with the dog, time spent with them on homework, time spent doing absolutely anything is how their minds process how we feel about them, so trying to maximise that time is the best way I can show them how much they mean to me!

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Deacon Vinh Do

Working amongst us and for us—Vinh's Journey

As I looked up Google Maps to find my way to Saint John's Parish, Heidelberg, I realised this parish was familiar to me- an old Church and a big presbytery. As it turned out, I had come to the parish twice and met different parish priests for different reasons. I met Fr Mario as the parish requested the IT department to help install a Wi-Fi adapter for the secretary's computer. Then in 2021, I came again to see Fr Joel on Good Shepherd Sunday for the promotion of vocation to the priesthood and religious life. (The talk is a great tradition of the seminary to send seminarians out to various parishes on Good Shepherd Sunday). What a coincidence! I am back again to be with you, the third time as a Deacon.

I am grateful to Fr Vinh Nguyen and the St. John's parish family for accepting me to serve you in your parish as a Deacon. It was a joy when I received Father Rector's call and he let me know I was to be at Saint John's.

Let me reintroduce myself in this article - My name is Vinh Hoang, Do (in Vietnamese- Vinh Hoàng, Đỗ). I grew up in Vietnam, a little town near Saigon or Ho Chi Minh City. I am the youngest of six children (2 girls and 4 boys).

Before coming to Australia, I came from a little town- small in area but dense and filled with

people, mainly Catholic. My parish's name is Phuong Lam Parish (Giáo Xứ Phương Lâm) where I went for Mass every morning at 4:30am with my parents and siblings and attended various catechism classes. I recognised my calling to the priesthood when I was about ten years old, at the second Mass after my first holy Communion. I had the desire to become a priest and I thanked God for the support that I had from my parents and grandparents. My mum brought me to Church every day (yes, sometimes it was hard to wake up that early, but it is worth it now- teaching me discipline and commitment). My dad bought me children gospels and the life of Saints books whenever he saw one. I loved them and discerned my call and nurtured the desire of becoming a priest more and more every day. I pray the same fire can stay burning brightly in me as I continue on the journey as a Deacon and then, as a priest for the Archdiocese of Melbourne. It has become my second home.

I came to Australia in 2008 and went to Westall Secondary College, Clayton South. I finished the last three years of high school at Westall, and I graduated from Swinburne University of Technology with a Bachelor of Science degree in 2014. Then in 2016 I was accepted by Archbishop

Denis Hart to study at the Corpus Christi College Seminary. I was ordained as a Deacon by Auxiliary Bishop Tony Ireland at Saint Joseph's Parish, Springvale, in December 2021. In November (God willing) I will be ordained to the full priesthood.



While studying at Swinburne in Hawthorn I became a Hawthorn supporter and that year they won the premiership! I enjoy all sorts of sports but I'm not particularly good at any! I like to travel and to explore new things.

Thank you for your friendship and for making me so welcome.

Please continue to pray for me and my fellow deacons and for more young people to give their lives for God and his people. It is totally worth it.

Fr Vinh Nguyen

Parish Priest, St John's Heidelberg

A couple of days ago, I took some pictures of the beautiful gardens that surrounds the presbytery and the church. Thanks to Mark who lovingly tends them and keeps them fresh.

When I sent some of these pictures to my friends and former colleagues in Vietnam, they all praised, "what a beautiful garden and view." They were very surprised that blossoms and flowers were out. I said that this is spring, and I tried to explain to Australia's four seasons are opposite to the four ones in Vietnam. Then they said, "Happy 'New Year!'" I said, "Thank you," but it is not a "New Year," yet, it is spring only.

Dear Friends! I told you this because in my childhood and till I came to Australia in 2005 whenever the season of spring comes, we celebrate the New Year (usually the time we celebrate Lunar New Year). That is why many people from Vietnam, not say all, identify a "spring" with a "new year".

However, whatever and wherever we experience 'spring season', I suppose that it can be seen as a sign of a 'new beginning', new hope.

We all have been experienced difficulty over the last couple of years. Anxiety and fear because of the COVID 19 Pandemic. People around the world, including ourselves, our families, relatives and friends have been suffering from this terrible virus. Many have been ill and many have died from the virus. We keep them in our prayers. May they rest in peace.

We give thanks to God as we have come through this crisis. We also give thanks to God for many doctors, nurses, healthcare workers who work so hard every day to care for the sick and dying and those that are trying to find some solutions to protect our health and our well-being.

We have begun our season of spring, many colours of blossoms and followers of beautiful nature giving us a new hope, new beginning. Life is gradually becoming normal, though we still need to be cautious for safety and protection for ourselves and the wider community.

Parish life, worship and daily activities are now almost back as usual. Thanks be to God that we can communally celebrate the Eucharist and other sacraments.

It is wonderful to see you all-different generations present and particularly number of our young people who come to Sunday Mass. Many members of our parish family make it to daily Mass which is wonderful. We can now also have our students and young people come to Mass every week with their teachers.

Spring brings new life, new beginnings and new hope. Together as a parish family, and with the Lords help, we can work at growing our faith so it keeps blossoming in all we do in our daily lives.

Blessings

Fr Vinh

The Eyrie

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expressed in this publication are
those of the individual authors and
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theology or moral and ethical
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday 30th September

**9.15am Mass &
Anointing of the Sick**

Sunday 2nd October

Parish Lunch

**Tuesday October 25th &
Wednesday 26th October**

First Reconciliation

Tuesday 1st November

All Saints Day

Wednesday 2nd November

All Souls Day

Sunday December 11th

**Celebration of
St. John's Feast Day**