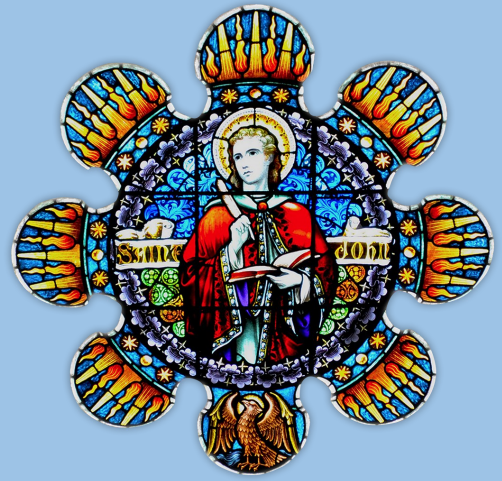


The Eyrie

St John's Catholic Parish Heidelberg



CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS - enjoying family & tradition



Josey & Noel Bucoy with their family - -Olivia 23,
Christian 21, Carina 13, Elena 8 and Celina 5

Christmas represents a very special time of the year. A time where traditions are embraced and quality family time are spent together. Growing up with a young and large family meant that Christmas was a joyful season where happiness is found in small and simple things.....waking up and together on Christmas morning, baking desserts or even leaving choc chip cookies, carrots and milk out for Santa and the reindeers. As the eldest, it has been so wholesome and heart warming to watch my siblings grow to love the Christmas spirit and experience the traditions I had when I was younger.. I look forward to this every year—Happy Christmas (**Olivia**).

During advent the time of preparation we decorate our house and the younger ones enjoy the sweets from the advent calender. As we attend mass during Advent we see the Advent Wreath with the four candles- one lit every Sunday leading up to Christ's birth. The purple

candles signify a time Hope, Peace and Love and is a time of prayer, penance and sacrifice and the pink candle is one of Joy. In this time of preparation the older member of our family attend confession in preparation for the coming of the baby Jesus.

Christmas is usually 7 AM (if we are lucky), at this time everyone is excited jumping out of bed to be together and see what Santa has brought, the older ones get just as much fun as the younger ones out of every gift left under the tree. It is a time of exchanging and giving gifts. We take many photos and then enjoy breakfast together. Later in the morning we are off to the extended family Christmas Lunch which normally consists of traditional Filipino, Chinese and Italian foods and there is always plenty left over for the evening meal. Here too, there is a traditional gift giving ceremony where one of our uncles acts like Santa and gives out more presents.

Together in our family we believe Christmas is a time where we should truly live out the word of God in our daily actions and words - Giving generously, showing kindness and love to those around us just as God did for us and praying to those above who have gone before us. Part of our Christmas is donating to charities nearby and packaging up a box which is shipped to those in the Philippines who have much less than we have and we hope that this package brings them joy at Christmas.

Christmas Blessings Josie & Noel Bucoy & family

Celebrations Connect us

What we celebrate has changed. How we celebrate has changed. The reason for celebrating has changed. Perhaps this is an indication of how our world is evolving, and our needs as a community are different to what it once was.

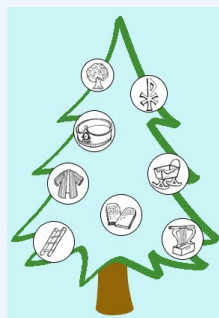
From acknowledging people on their birthdays, to holding family gatherings for the holidays, to celebrate faith, historical or current events, to endless number of occasions to celebrate. Celebrations connect us to people. Connections help us feel good about ourselves and provide an overarching sense of belonging.

We celebrate things essential to us and our needs, whether joyful events like a birthday or Christmas, or a sad event like the passing of a loved one. It's the connectedness and togetherness that makes a celebration meaningful.

Celebration is essential to our faith and culture. It plays an important role in everyone's life. The beauty of celebration today is that we are more open to reasons to celebrate. Our bandwidth and understanding of different cultures has enabled us to share in culture experiences and grow individually and as a society.

There is still, however, a place for celebration through tradition. As we are immersed in the current season of Advent, perhaps celebrating tradition is more important now than ever because our lives are so busy and different to how they looked years ago.

The Jesse Tree is a feature of our faith that should be celebrated and acknowledged. .



The Jesse Tree is anchored in Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Jesse was the father of David, Jesus is descended from the line of

David. He is the branch God promised would grow from Jesse's family tree. Each symbol represents a significant story from within the family tree, and signifies a step toward the birth of Jesus.

Christmas is, yes, a celebration of the birth of Jesus, but also for those who descended before him. Like many others, my celebration of Christmas is spent with family and friends. But those on my family tree that are not here today are not forgotten.

St John's School

Religious Education Leader

Mr Adam Salamme

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.

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS—Polish Style

My family is Polish and we celebrate the Christmas vigil, which we call Wigilia; you pronounce the 'W' like a v. We wait for Jesus and express our joy for what we know is coming.

Back in Poland the vigil feast would begin when the first star comes out, but of course this doesn't work with daylight savings.

Next, we say grace and then share opłatek (opwatek). This is unconsecrated communion wafer. Each person takes some. We then greet each person present. We exchange our good wishes, advice, appreciation and love. Each person breaks off a small piece of the other's opłatek, eats it, and then moves on to the next person until we have completed the ritual with everyone.

Then we sit down to the feast I look forward to all day. Christmas Eve is supposed to be a day of fasting, which suits me just fine as most of the dishes served at Wigilia are not the sorts of dishes I eat on a regular basis and I have plenty of room for them all.

It is a tradition to set an extra place for an unexpected guest, following the Polish maxim, "If

a guest is in the house, God is in the house". Traditionally 12 dishes are served. There is a dish for each of the 12 apostles and twelve months of the year, but as it is Advent, there should be no meat; none is ever served at Wigilia.

We always begin with barszcz ('barshch'); my favourite soup. It is a beetroot broth served with little dumplings called uszki ('ooshki'), which translates as little ears.

This is followed by plenty of seafood, salad, vegetables and then pierogi. These are larger dumplings with a variety of fillings: mushroom, cabbage and onion, sweet cheese, potato and onion and then cherry ones for desert. These are very labour intensive to make and we usually have a family working bee to prepare them a week or two in advance.

It takes a couple of hours to get through such a meal and as you can imagine, we are all very full at the end of it. We then exchange our gifts and sing carols. We usually alternate; one Polish carol and then one in English.



The night ends with Pasterka, which literally means 'shepherd's mass', as they were the first to be told of our Lord's birth. It is the traditional midnight mass and always has such a beautiful and holy atmosphere. It really is a very special end to the evening. I am often too tired and full to go, but I think I shall this year, to remind myself of the joyous gift of having Christ in my life.

Paul Zebrowski

Deacon Vinh becomes Fr Vinh Do



Deacon Vinh Do became Rev. Fr Vinh Do on Saturday November 19th. He was ordained by Archbishop Peter Comensoli at St. Patricks Cathedral Melbourne along with two other priests and three Deacons.

Candidates for the Priesthood and Diaconate lay prostrate and offer themselves to the Lord.



Ordination to the Priesthood of Huy Nguyen, Vinh Do and An Le, and the ordination to the transitional diaconate of Thomas Christie, Tien Tran and Peter (Ngoc) Nguyen.



We were honoured to have Fr Vinh Do offer his first Mass at 10.30am in St. John's Heidelberg. It was a beautiful and moving occasion and Fr Vinh Do said his second mass that same day at 5pm in the parish of St. Joseph's Springvale, where his Grandparents live.

The celebration was joyous, the church full and the altar looked beautiful. Fr Vinh Do was supported by our Fr Vinh Nguyen, Very Rev Denis Stanley (Rector of Corpus Christi College) and Deacon Tien Tran.

Celebrating together - with Fr Vinh Do and his family

After the mass parishioners joined Fr Vinh Do and his family in the hall. A very proud Mum and Dad who had come from Vietnam to share in the joy of their son's ordination to the priesthood.

John McGrath spoke on behalf of the parish congratulating Fr Vinh and thanking him for the joy he had brought to our parish in his time as Deacon here with us.



Father Vin Nguyen presented Father Vinh Do with a cheque and a Book of Blessings on behalf of the parish.

Father Vinh Do has recently been appointed as assistant Priest at St. Bede's North Balwyn, taking up his appointment on December 20th.

Term 4 - St John's Acting Principal - Ms Elizabeth Whiting

St. John's Vision is "An inclusive Catholic community fostering a commitment to faith and nurturing a love of learning."



Celebrating Retirement—Thank you and Farewell to



Mrs Maureen Stella

After 40 years of service to Catholic Education and 6 years of service to St John's Heidelberg we say thank you and farewell to Mrs Maureen Stella who will be retiring at the end of the 2022 school year. We are most grateful for the gifts that Maureen brought to the St John's school community over her tenure. Maureen has led significant initiatives at St John's during her tenure which commenced under the leadership of Fr Mario Zammit. Maureen's greatest legacy is her extensive work completed for the St John's Primary Play space Master Plan. This million dollar improvement to St John's external play and working environment, designed and built in consultation with the students, families and staff of

St John's, frames our school with a safe, aesthetically attractive and functional outdoor space. We admire Maureen for her strength, drive and passion as a woman in Catholic leadership.

On behalf of the school and the parish we wish her well as she enjoys retirement.

Celebrating St John's Feast Day - Taking Social Justice Action

St John, the patron saint of love, loyalty, friendships and authors, was celebrated on Friday 25 November at our school, due to the feast day falling in the school holidays. This special St John's Day organised by the students included market stalls and games led by the Year 5 and 6 students. The students sold donated items, ran games for the P-4 students and held two discos. Congratulations to all involved

on this most successful social justice initiative raising valuable funds for St. Vincent De Paul.



Celebrating Australian History and Democracy - St John's Canberra Camp

In the first week of Term Four our Year 5 / 6 students attended Canberra Camp. It was with great pride that many of our staff, including myself, received wonderful feedback about the St John's students. The behaviour and engagement as learners of our 88 students, as they toured Canberra, was a credit to both our school and families.



Celebrating Christmas - The Cugia Family



On Christmas Eve, we attend church with our extended family to celebrate the birth of Jesus and we participate in Christmas carols performed by the church choir. On Christmas day we get together with mum's family (because dad's are all in Sardinia) for a big traditional Lebanese lunch (which usually extends to a big dinner) and we all gather around the tree to open Christmas presents. If it's a hot day we also go for a swim in the pool!

Celebrating Christmas - The Falcone & Swarnapuri Family

Our Christmas celebrations begin on Christmas Eve. My Mum and Dad come for dinner at our house and we eat ravioli - a household favourite that honours my Dad's Italian heritage. On Christmas Day we celebrate at my Mum's house with a traditional Australian Christmas lunch. We enjoy pork, lamb, turkey, ham and all the trimmings. Pictured is our family, myself, my husband, our daughter Sofia, who is in Prep at St John's, and Tara, my sister, her husband and their daughters Allie and Charlotte, my husband's brother, my Mum, Dad and Grandpa (Great Grandpa to our children and my nieces). This year we will also celebrate Christmas night at our house with my husband's cousins. We plan on cooking lamb biriyani to honour my husband's Indian heritage. Merry Christmas to all.



Celebrating Christmas—Grade 6 quotes



When I have a family feast or dinner, my mum makes Indian food and her mum makes a special dessert. The kids stay at a different table and eat non-spicy food. We make jokes and talk about family. No phones are allowed when we celebrate. ..Ann Jose Yr6

When I gather with family to feast, we usually do it on New Year or Christmas time. My Auntie makes her 'famous' dish filled with meat and vegetables. We also exchange presents. Charlotte Lin Yr6

On special occasions like Christmas, Easter and birthdays, we go to my Nonna's house and we all sit at the table in the living room. After dinner, we always have dessert. I always have so much fun every time I go. Roman Bongiorno Yr6



Married October 1972- John & Maureen McGrath



Maureen: A senior work colleague suggested I would like this new guy in head office. 'He is a Catholic and plays for Collingwood.' Being a Carlton supporter the Catholic part was a high priority. We meet eventually, started dating and enjoyed many good and happy times together. Our interests, faith, politics, and values matched. Our dating time revolved around movies, family functions, weekend drives and many picnics. Lots of laughter.....Who wouldn't fall in love with this, 'Tall, dark and handsome' gorgeous gentleman and yes John has always been a gentleman with me. My mother told me, "if you want to be treated like a lady, act like one", one of her many, many helpful advices she shared with me. My parents both liked John also. It's always helpful for your parents and family to like and get on with your boyfriend.

John: My upbringing helped form my views on life and expectations of my future. I quickly fell in love with Maureen (and her dark brown eyes) as she was everything I hoped for in a wife. Besides our values, we both had a strong commitment to our Catholic faith and a common view of how our future would look.

J & M—We married two and a half years later St Raphael's West Preston, after completing our Pre Cana classes, which gave us strong hope in our faith and confidence in our future. Within nine years God gave us a home and four wonderful children. It was a mutual decision that M would be the stay-at-home mum, whilst J worked and provided for our material needs. We both worked together being present and emotionally supportive to each other. Respect, honour, trust and love were the key to our marriage. John's job took him away often and we at home did our best to keep the home fires burning.

There was always great excitement on his return and a concert from our four young ones of 'Young Talent Time' in Rosanna. If John did not call each working day by 10:30 (coffee time) I just knew he must have been extremely busy ... he would say he just needed to hear my voice for a few minutes. As I did his xx

Our faith has been paramount and the strongest glue getting us to our fiftieth wedding anniversary and beyond. Heavenly Bliss? Not always, but with the help of God and the many years we have built our love and trust and with patience we continue to try everyday for happiness and enjoyment in our retirement years, and with our growing, wonderful supportive family.



Congratulation Maureen & John on your 50th Wedding Anniversary October 2022



On Sunday 2nd October the Parish Luncheon was held in the grounds of the Parish House. A bright sunny day set the mood for a coming together as parish and celebrating together in a very relaxed atmosphere.

Fr Vinh gave the welcome and the luncheon got underway. Mary the Parish Secretary and Elizabeth Williamson Pastoral Associate organised a gourmet spread of scrumptious wraps, sandwiches, salads, and savoury finger food. This was followed by a cuppa and cake as well as ice cream in cones which were enjoyed by young and old including Fr Vinh!

Nametags helped us all get to know each other a little better and the day was a great success with many staying and enjoying the sunshine with their fellow parishioners.

Planning a funeral?

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FR VINH NGUYEN

Parish Priest, St John's Heidelberg

Together as Parish Family— Blessings and Celebrations

I have joined you as your parish priest for five months now. It has been a wonderful experience for me to join with you on many joyful and remarkable moments and celebrations in your lives. As I have mentioned in one of our parish weekly bulletins that people from our parish community have celebrated achievements through their life of service, vocation, and turning points in their journey of faith in a Christian life. May I mention again some of the remarkable points in lives of many and congratulate Kevin Andrews celebrating 30 years of service as a Parliament Representative. Peter and Michelle Penson, John and Maureen McGrath who celebrated 50 years of marriage. Our children from the parish and school celebrated and received the Sacraments of Confirmation, First Communion and First Reconciliation. Recently, we joined Fr Vinh Do, congratulating him as he was ordained a priest and celebrated his first Mass of thanksgiving for us.

Many of us celebrated our birthdays, baptisms for your children and weddings during this period of time. Happy birthday to you and congratulations on your achievements.

Our lives are always full of celebrations.

The Gospel often tells us that Jesus joined people for celebrations and sat with them at their table. He joined with his mother and his disciples at the wedding at Cana and turned water into wine to cheer human hearts. He joined sinners and tax collectors and ate with them and won them back to God. He told us many parables of celebrations to point to the joyful banquet in the heavenly Kingdom.

As a Christian, our life should be a joyful one. As St Paul reminds us in his letter to the Philippians 4:4-9: **"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"**

As we journey to celebrate the birthday of the Lord, let us prepare ourselves to receive Him with joy because He comes to bring His love, peace and joy to us all. May the Blessings of our Lord and Saviour come upon you and your family abundantly as we celebrate His Birthday and may His love, peace and joy be always with you throughout the New Year to come.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Fr Vinh

The Eyrie

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WELCOME**

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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

2nd Rite of Reconciliation

Friday 16th December 7pm

CHRISTMAS MASSES

**Christmas Eve Saturday 24th
December**

6pm Mass

(Carols at 8.30pm)

9pm Mass

**Christmas Day Mass
Sunday 25th December**

8.30am

10.30am

(No 5pm Mass)

New Years Eve

Saturday 31st December

6pm Mass

New Years Day Sunday

1st January

8.30am, 10.30am & 5pm