

The Eyrie

St John's Catholic Parish Heidelberg



Motherhood

Marguerite Ryan, St John's Parishioner

Marguerite Ryan has been a parishioner at St John's for 18 years.

Born in Canberra she is the third eldest of ten brothers and sisters. She became a teacher in 1986 and married John in 1994. She moved with her husband and two children (Aislinn and Patrick) to Melbourne in 2001 so that John could take up a teaching position at the senior campus at Xavier College. They were delighted to become part of a parish that had been a community of faith and worship for St John's families for many years.

Can I first say that I am fully aware that there are many women in front of me who are so much more qualified to talk about motherhood than I am; you have more children and many more years of experience! So I thought I would draw on not just my experiences but on those of Mary – with whom we share that all-encompassing experience that is Motherhood.

Motherhood can be an experience of extremes – of pain, of joy, of frustration, of happiness and of love. We share all this with Mary, who, despite having a child who would not sin, still lived through all the delights and fears that go with having children. We share her anxiety at the prospect of giving birth and, although ours would not have taken place in a stable surrounded by animals, our emotions at that time would be as one.

We all, I'm sure, share with her the sickening fear of having lost a child, regardless of where it happened – be it in a shopping mall or on a journey from Jerusalem - and we



share the immense relief, joy and yes, anger, when we find them safe and sound and oblivious to the pain they have caused!

We share with her the same pride and wonder when we are told by teachers, coaches or, in her case, angels, shepherds, elders and Kings, that our children are special or have achieved outstanding goals. And, like her, we ponder all these things in our hearts.

We also share with her the experience of watching our children overtake us – in technological know-how, in travel, in 'feeling the fear and doing it anyway!' experiences and in personal growth - as they stretch their wings and take flight! We can empathise as she watched her son leave home, to live the life of an itinerant preacher, but how proud she was of Jesus at the wedding of Cana – not knowing how he'd fix things, but knowing that he could!

We share with her the agony and helplessness of seeing a child in pain (be it physical, mental or emotional) and knowing that there is little or nothing we can do about it but be there....ready to help pick up the pieces if we can.

But perhaps, most importantly, we share with her the day-to-day feel of Motherhood – all the routines, tasks and interactions that go with the relationship of mother and child and perhaps what brings the greatest contentment and joy.

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Women and Times of Change

Jan McCaffrey, St John's Parishioner

Women have played vital roles in the Church in the past, in current times and into the future. Over many years their roles have changed and I believe continue and will continue to do so.

Since childhood I have been involved in church in varying ways. Commencing in Grade 6 in primary school I joined the Legion of Mary through which we, as best a child could, contributed to others in our parish. With my very good friend, Sue, I delivered many a miraculous medal to newly baptised babies as a way of welcoming them into our community. In the same era, I joined the Children of Mary, a group of girls that would gather together once a month in blue cloaks for Mass on a Sunday morning. During those years – the sixties – I witnessed very little change in the role of women. Women were in the church choir, arranged flowers, washed and ironed church linen, and sometimes cleaned the church. Predominantly religious taught in Catholic primary and secondary schools, nursed in Catholic hospitals or worked in those capacities on the missions.

By the time I finished my secondary education at an all girls Catholic secondary school, the numbers of girls progressing to Year 12 was increasing. In the year level ahead of

me, only eight girls progressed to Year 12 whereas thirty in my cohort completed Year 12, hoping to move onto either teaching or nursing or maybe office work of some kind. As with the church, the career options for females were limited. I chose teaching.

At that time, my involvement in church life was limited to belonging to the YCW, leading a Junior Legion of Mary group, occasionally playing the organ for Sunday Mass and attending a Catholic teacher's college. Two changes were happening that I recall, the number of children enrolled in Catholic primary schools was increasing and the number of women entering the convent was starting to decline hence the need for lay teachers in our Catholic schools, a role played in the main by women.

It was not until 1983 that Canon Law allowed females to serve on the altar at the discretion of the local priest, but it did not become a more common practice until 1993. Similarly, with female readers at Mass. Women were not allowed onto the sanctuary.

Regardless of the limitations, women have been serving our parishes in a variety of ways: Women have equal rights to be sponsors at Baptism and Confirmation. In Matrimony, they're



treated and regarded as full, equal partners with their husbands. Women can serve on the parish council and finance committees. They can be readers at Mass, *extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist*, and ushers. They can work in the parish office, teach religious education, just like their male counterparts. And many parishes have women *pastoral associates* —who help the priest with many spiritual and pastoral duties. It is mainly women who take communion to the sick and isolated in hospital, aged care facilities and in their homes. The Church has women who are canon lawyers, judges, and chancellors across the country. In our parish, women play many of these roles and more.

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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.

The Role of Women in the Church

Bernadette Nzenza

What is the church? The church can mean the building that shelters us as we worship, the denomination and parish we belong to or the body of believers in our community and the world over.

I have only been part of the church for about 30 years, which is a very short time in comparison to the 2000+ year history of the church. I have also had the opportunity to be a young girl looking up to women in one country and then became a woman whilst living in another. One thing seems to remain the same and that is the role of women in the parish is largely influenced by women's role in society; it seems to be dictated by whatever are the cultural norms and age-old traditions of the people in the area.

Women tend to ensure the church building is cleaned and that it has beautiful floral arrangements - they may even oversee the maintenance of the church gardens and grounds. They assist to ensure the parish house is in order and, in some instances, provide meals for the priests and those working in ministry. During Sunday Mass, women are involved in key parts of the liturgy such as choir, communion ministry, offertory collection/procession and reading of the Word. Women lead



various parish groups like those for the youth or seniors. It would be fair to say women are the lifeblood of a parish, whilst there are men who take part in all the roles mentioned above, I have observed that the roles are more often filled by women. In church leadership, however we have the Pope, bishops and priests, all of whom are men. In parish leadership committees or at the diocese level, there are both women and men whose input is valued and contribute to making the church the strong body that it is today.

I do not know what the church will look like in the future, however I do know that there is potential for a lot of change. For instance, many have requested that the church have women as priests, whilst Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis have given

a definite response that this would not be possible due to apostolic succession. Who knows what future pontiffs may decide, especially in today's feminist society where women are constantly compared to men with the aim of proving that they can be the same as or better than men.

For me personally, as a part of the body of believers and the parish, I believe it is my role to participate in the life of the church, to share my gifts and talents and thereby enrich the lives of others whilst they do the same for me. Regardless of any official positions or titles as a woman, as a person, it is crucial for me to fellowship with and lead other believers in a way that brings life. I am not perfect at it. After all, I am a human being. However, I certainly aim for it based on the message of Micah 6:8 which says:

“He has told you, O mortal,
what is good;

and what does the Lord
require of you

but to do justice,
and to love kindness,

and to walk humbly
with your God...”

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The Ministry of Women

Cecily Devasia

From the very beginning of Christianity, women have played a vital role in the church, they have helped in the missionary activities of the Apostles by spreading the Gospel (Acts 1:12 -14; Acts 9 : 36 – 42; Acts 16 : 13 – 15; Rom 16:1; Cor 16: 19; 2 Tim 1:5; 4:19). For God, men and women are equal, both bearing the image of God himself. Each one of us is born for a purpose; contributing to the kingdom of God.

Participation of women in various ministries is essential for the nourishment of the church whether it is the Legions of Mary, Communion ministries, or be a reader at Mass. Women also play a vital role in their families, they nourish their children not only with good food, but also with the amazing word of God, so their kids can develop the faith which will help them to be true followers of Christ. Our church family is deeply enriched through the presence and service of these women.

As a woman, my contribution is also to serve the church. Pope Francis said, "Women have unique ability to share the Catholic faith because of their penchant to experience love and share it with others". My dream for the future church is something that Pope Francis believes in, to have a scandal-free church. It is true

that few members of the Catholic Church might have fallen into sin, but each Catholic must live their true faith and show the true love of Jesus to the world. It would be really beautiful to see a church filled with young people, families and elders.

In his homily to the Synod of Bishops, Pope Francis tells us to share our dreams and hopes with the young people. He also encourages to proceed with hope which can broaden our horizons, expand our hearts and transform those frames of mind that today paralyse, separate and alienate us from young people, leaving them exposed to stormy seas, orphans without a faith community that should sustain them, orphans devoid of a sense of direction and meaning in life. He further adds that we should make efforts to reverse situations of uncertainty, exclusion and violence, to which our young people are exposed. He also emphasised "Love for the Gospel and for the people who have been entrusted to us, challenges us to broaden our horizons and not lose sight of the mission to which we are called. In this way we shall aim for an even greater good that will benefit all of us. Without this disposition, all of our efforts will be in vain."



Jesus at the Last Supper instituted the sacrament of Holy Orders to perpetuate the sacrifice at Calvary. As we recite during the Mass; I truly believe in the Holy Catholic Church, and I pray for her always. May the Holy Spirit guide the women of our church to contribute with love towards the greater glory of our Lord and fulfil the vision that Pope Francis has for the Catholic Church.

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The Legion of Mary

Sue Kalotas

My name is Sue Kalotas and have been a parishioner of St. John's for over 30 years. The Legion of Mary started in 2007 here at our parish and I have been a member since 2011 with five other members.

The Legion of Mary was started in 1921 by Frank Duff in Ireland and now serves the church in about 170 countries. We are a lay apostolic association and the object of the legion is to serve God through our neighbour. The Legion sees as its priority the spiritual and social welfare of each individual. The members participate in the life of the parish through visitation of families, the sick, elderly and housebound both in their homes and hospital and aged care homes. We do all this under the guidance of Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces, who is our Queen and our Mother.

We meet every week in St John's parish rooms. Our meetings start with the recitation of the Rosary, Legionary prayers and spiritual readings. We reflect on the work

done in the past week and discuss the work to be done the following week.

We take the Fatima statue to parishioners and will often say the Rosary with the family. We visit Cleavdon Terrace aged care home to say the Rosary each week, which has about 12 Catholic residents at the moment.

Other work is visiting sick and housebound and taking Holy Communion to those who no longer can get to Church. We also transport parishioners to Mass, one member takes someone for weekly shopping, and generally we help out where needed. We are not in a position to give financial support; for such cases we direct them to St Vincent de Paul. Every year, the Legion of Mary holds a public rosary taking Our Lady's statue around the streets, the last one was held at St Francis of Assisi in Mill Park. We also hold a yearly Mass where all legionaries consecrate themselves to Our Lady Queen of the Legion.



We feel very privileged to work for Mary and, in turn, she gives us strength and courage to do her work. The Legion of Mary is open to all over the age of 18 years. Realising the necessity for a strong support of prayer, the Legion has Auxiliary members associate themselves with the Legion by undertaking a service of prayer, this is done by praying the Rosary daily and reciting the Legion prayers.

Continued from front page...

And so I would like to conclude with a prayer to Mary from and for us all

Mary, on this day when we honour all mothers, we turn to you. We thank God for the great gift of motherhood which we share with you. Thank you for your "Yes" to the invitation of the angel which brought Heaven to Earth and changed human history. You opened yourself to God's word and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Dear Mary, intercede for all mothers. Ask your Son, Jesus, to give them the grace of love as they join with you in giving their own "Yes". May they find daily strength to answer the call to sacrificial love - the very heart of the vocation of motherhood. May their love and witness be a source of great inspiration for all of us called to follow your Son.

We ask this in your Son's name,
Amen.

We Speak for the Trees!

Term Three Learning Showcase

Our school community came together for our bi-annual Learning Showcase at OLMC in the Mercedes Hogan Theatre for three wonderful performances.

The students enthusiastically rehearsed for the showcase with the sustainability theme- "We Speak for the Trees!" and it was indeed, a fabulous display of our students'

talents in the area of the Performing Arts. I would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of our Performing Arts teacher, Jo Campbell for her time and commitment with this year's Showcase. Jo scripted, choreographed and directed a unique production that enabled every student to have a part in their class' performance. I was very

impressed with the confidence and skills displayed by our students from Prep-Year Six and I congratulate all St John's students. Indeed it was another wonderful school community event! Congratulations to both students and staff and to parents for their engagement and support with the Learning Showcase.

Mrs Carmel Armiento



First Eucharist

Saturday 15th June, 2019



Confirmation

Sunday 11th August, 2019



Discipleship and Women

Domenica Chincarini

It is unfortunate, but inevitable that talk of women in the Church, steers toward male clergy and ordination. While this in itself is an important debate and issue that must be addressed, we should not focus on this aspect in isolation.

Instead, we should maintain a perspective acknowledging that out of 1.25 billion Catholics worldwide, there 462,300 ordained men, and the 'unordained' leaders number 54,229 men and 670,320 women. Due to a patriarchal, cultural history and development of the church, Catholicism has ordination linked to leadership, but even considering this fact, as figures indicate, women in leadership exceeds the number of male clergy, and they only make up only .037% of the whole priesthood of the body of the Church. Let us take heart that Women in the Church are not underrepresented, nor underestimated. It is a positive step that Pope Francis has established at least a dialogue on broadening "opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church".

Together with other rationales, male-only ordination essentially finds its roots in Jesus' selection of 12 male apostles, but we must be mindful that the Word made Incarnate, humanlike Jesus, respected and was working within a patriarchal context, where a woman's status was enshrined and indeed revered in motherhood.

Regardless of the imposition of a cultural backdrop of the Early Christian times, there appeared to be a more egalitarian approach to both men and women, which embodies Paul's letter to the Galatians "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ". This



Domenica Chincarini Ashworth, is one of seven children, and enjoys a busy family life with 14 nieces and nephews. After working as a professional librarian in academe, she has been working these last 10 years in a family business, managing administration. She was educated in the Catholic education system, and took a degree in Arts, with Honours, followed by Masters in Information Management. Her interests are history/heritage, music, art, culture, and cooking.

scriptural quote has been described as "profoundly liberating" implying "new freedoms for women". It has also been said that Christianity had "the effect of undermining traditional roles of both women and slaves", and although it did not equate to an immediate change in cultural attitudes towards women, their influence undermined traditional societal attitudes. Also, another modern writer notes that Christianity

offered women "the opportunity to regard themselves as independent personalities". Of course, attesting to this 'independence' are the many female icons and saints that, from Early Christian society through to recent history, shine a light for us against a backdrop of patriarchy. The list of women is extensive, but some prominent examples include Mary, Mother of God, Mary Magdalene, St Helena, St Catherine of Siena, Joan of Arc, St Teresa of Avila, Hildegard von Bingen, St Kateri Tekekwitha, St Mary of the Cross and St Teresa of Calcutta.

With this backdrop, I see the Church of the future, where the essence of Faith is filtered to the essentials of the original Christian church, and indeed, a revival of the basic thrust of Vatican Council II. As Jesus and his Apostles were working within the cultural context of the time, so too must our Church review itself, within the vastly different world we live in, and associated multifarious cultural contexts within this world creation; at the same time, preserving the beautiful theology of our Faith. Given the current 'crisis' in our Church, there is no better time for reform. This will include pivotal and strategic roles for women and men equally. There should be an emphasis on harmony of men and women, rather than the superiority of men over women or women over men. I am a firm believer of equal worth and dignity of both sexes, whatever our roles.

Having made these points, I see my role in the parish, by my baptism, as sharing the priesthood of Christ and his mission. My aim is to be a better disciple, and rely on the Holy Spirit to guide me, wherever this journey of faith development and my charisms may lead me.

Sue Westhorp

Manager of Spiritual Care, Austin Health

I belong to the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA), which is one of the many Lutheran church organizations around the world. Unlike the majority of these churches the LCA does not ordain women, but has been debating this topic for the past thirty years. As recently as October 2018 the LCA voted on this issue, with a majority of synod delegates voting in favour of the ordination of women, but the result was just short of the two thirds majority required to change teaching and practice in this area. As a woman who has discerned a call to ordained ministry, this has been heartbreaking for me.

Before I began working in hospital chaplaincy and spiritual care, I worked for the LCA in my local parish for 10 years, and had responsibility for music, pastoral care and adult education. I was also a member of the National Commission on Worship and the Department of Liturgics. My involvement now consists of reading the Bible readings, leading lay-reading services (during pastoral vacancy) and playing music. Women also assist in worship by helping serve communion and leading prayers. At my parish there are 7 female part-time lay workers who work in areas such as family ministry, youth ministry, administration, pastoral care and music.



When I started working in chaplaincy, I was often told that chaplains exist on the fringes of their churches and that often the ministry of chaplaincy is not valued or understood – so I felt like I'd found a home and I still do. I spent some time in Lutheran hospital chaplaincy but found that quite limiting, so I applied for a position in palliative care chaplaincy. This involved multi-faith ministry – it doesn't compromise who I am as a Christian or a Lutheran – and I worked with people to help them make meaning out of what they are experiencing in hospital. I've continued this work as the Manager of Spiritual Care at Austin Health, and I love it. As I transitioned from church to hospital, I experienced some anger that I was at last being

recognised for my gifts and abilities, whereas in the church I hadn't been.

I have two images or symbols that sustain me on my journey:

The first is the image of the crucified Christ - the Christ who knows pain, who knows rejection, who knows suffering – this is the Christ I carry as I visit patients and families in my work. This is the Christ who carries me in my pain about ordination.

The second symbol that sustains me is something I was given by the wife of a late pastor, to whom I had the privilege of ministering in his last days: his home communion set. When I first received this, I decided to leave the vessels exactly the way they were – unpolished, with a hint of this dear departed pastor still about them. A couple of years ago, I decided to clean them so they were ready for use. For me this is like the maidens keeping their lamps trimmed – this is both a symbol of what I cannot yet do, and a symbol of my hope and readiness. My hope for my church is that it will recognise the ministry of both men and women by deciding to allow the ordination of both, thus bringing fullness to the ministry of the LCA that does not yet exist.

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Rebecca Picone

CEO and Founding Director, Peace of Mind Foundation

Sadly, brain cancer kills more children in Australia than any other disease. It also kills more people under 40 in Australia than any other cancer. While brain cancer affects individuals in different ways, there are common effects shared by many patients that cause a reduced quality of life; including cognitive and behavioural changes, and mobility impairments.

The impact of a brain cancer diagnosis on families, loved ones, and carers is overwhelming, both emotionally and financially. Gaps in the service/healthcare systems often add additional stress at an already devastating time.

The Peace of Mind Foundation supports families to fill help this gap and has the expertise required to ensure the right information and supports are on-hand at different stages of an individual and/or family's brain cancer journey. Services are delivered directly with compassion to those who require them.

Peace of Mind Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation, predominantly staffed by volunteers, that is driven by a commitment to provide practical, emotional and financial support nationwide that aims to alleviate the stress and demands of a brain cancer diagnosis. Services on offer include counselling, financial assistance, home based supports, and retreat weekends.



By facilitating shared experiences, Peace of Mind offers an opportunity for patients and families to connect. It is this connection with an empathic community that enables families to continue to move forward during even the most difficult of times.

All of the funds raised by Peace of Mind go directly to those who require care and support. Peace of Mind requires the ongoing support of community members to assist us. You can become involved as a volunteer, host a fundraiser or give a financial donation, or donations of services to support our cause. Together we truly can make a difference to families fighting brain cancer!

Continued from page 2...

We are to be grateful to the many women of the past and present for their amazing contribution to our parish and community. Just as women are often the backbone of the family home, so is it with parishes and communities. Women have paved the way forward to change that will lead to increased roles and responsibilities.

Currently in Australia, the Church is preparing for the 2020 Plenary

Council to which we are all invited to contribute. Many hope that the Plenary Council will lead to change including that of the role of women. I see women continuing their important pastoral involvement, their administration and managerial involvements, but extended to administering sacraments as many already do in outback areas of Australia, and to increased leadership roles in the Church. Late in 2018, Sr Maeve Heaney cited Pope Francis in saying,

"Pope Francis has asked the global theological community to reflect upon ways in which the inclusion of women in the decision-making of the Church can be advanced".

Let us path the way forward, through the Plenary Council, for women to become Parish Administrators, deacons and ordained priests and to be given equal decision making rights as our male counterparts.

Fr Mario

Parish Priest, St John's Heidelberg

Some time ago, I was having a very interesting discussion about spirituality and religion, two related and yet different concepts. We often use these terms interchangeably, and at times mix up the concepts they refer to. I will try to explain my personal understanding of these concepts.

Men and women are spiritual beings. A very clear proof of this is that, from the earliest of times, humanity has tried to reach beyond itself and try to understand how things came into being. Many ancient cultures have developed their Mythological stories, or Dreamtime which, at its basis, tries to answer questions around the creation of the world and humanity, and about the meaning of suffering and death. Similarly, philosophy, science, poetry and art are expressions of spirituality; a search for a deeper meaning.

People also express their spirituality in the way they relate to people around them. A spiritual being goes beyond oneself and reaches out to those around him or her. Love is based on our spirituality; we see the goodness in others or are empathetic towards others, and therefore are moved to reach out to others around us.

As Christians, our spirituality is coloured by the teachings of Christ. The 'Mythology' that provides us with the answers for our questions about creation, suffering and death is found in the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis. The Judeo-Christian (Hebrew and Christian) scriptures speak of a God who created the world and all that is in it. It speaks of a humanity that has the life of God and created in the image and

likeness of this God. We also speak of love as being an image of God; in a way, God in me reaches out to God that is in the other person. Other belief systems offer different answers, as they basically respond to the same questions.

People with the same spirituality tend to congregate and identify with a 'religion' that helps them give expression to their spirituality. Typically, a 'religion' is organised around a system of worship and some type of leadership. The way a particular religion is organised and expresses itself is often cultural; it takes its symbols from the surrounding cultures. If we take Roman Catholicism as an example of this, historically, we know that many of the terms and concepts we still use today were picked up from the Roman Empire during the first centuries of Christianity's existence. The structure and name of some of our buildings, and the robes used during our worship, have their origins in a Roman cultural setting.

When we refer to a person as being religious, we normally mean a person who gives expression to his spirituality by identifying with and practices of a certain religion. Within a Roman Catholic understanding, a religious person is one who participates at Mass regularly. The religious person is one who is committed to a certain practice of religion. (Here we do hit a slight problem because within another context, the term 'religious' also refers to a person who is a religious sister or a religious priest, belonging to a religious congregation!)

In our experience today we recognise that fewer of our relatives and friends are religious; they no longer participate in religion. This does not mean that they are not spiritual or that they do not believe. Many people who are not religious are still deeply spiritual and have a deep relationship with a supreme being whom they recognise as God. Some people have also created their own prayer practices to help them express their relationship with God and often a deep spirituality is the driving force behind many of the charitable activities that happen around us.

Within a Christian context, religion starts when 'two or three are gathered in my name.' This is the basis of Christianity and of what we often refer to as 'Church.' The original Greek term 'ecclesia' simply translates as 'a gathering of people.' In our case we gather around a same faith in a creating God and in a God who chooses to come and live among us in Jesus, and lives within us in the Holy Spirit. In our world today, the human aspect of religion, the sins of its leadership, have caused many to dis-associate themselves from religion, but remain deeply spiritual and committed to their faith.

Personally, although I struggle with the various sins of institutional religion, I still find it necessary to belong to a group of people who with me share my style of spirituality. While institutional religion has a very important role, it is spirituality that keeps the religion I participate in, alive.

Mario

The Eyrie

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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

Thursday 17th October

First Reconciliation at 7pm.

Thursday 24th October

First Reconciliation at 7pm
(second session).

Wednesday 30th October

2019 Parish Talk 1
Francis Xavier Meeting Room 7:30-9pm.

Wednesday 6th November

2019 Parish Talk 2
Francis Xavier Meeting Room 7:30-9pm.

Wednesday 13th November

2019 Parish Talk 3
Francis Xavier Meeting Room 7:30-9pm.

Thursday 28th November

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

Sunday 1st December

First Sunday of Advent.

Saturday 6th December

Grief and Loss Mass
for parishioners and friends who have
lost a relative in the past year at 7:30pm.

Friday 20th December

Reconciliation (Confession) - second rite
with individual confession at 7:30pm.