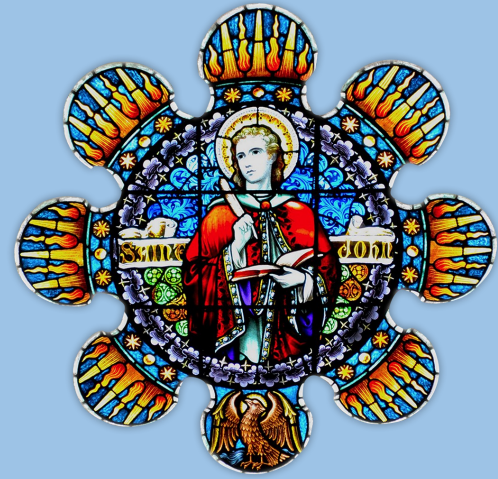


# The Eyrie

St John's Catholic Parish Heidelberg



## Our reflection on 2020

Millie Harford and Charlie Bourke, St John's School Captains

As members of the Year 6 graduating class of St John's and 2020 School Captains, we would summarise our time here as exciting and eventful. We have had plenty of good memories together and are hoping to make some more before the end of the year.



When I came to this school last year, I didn't know anyone, however there were some really kind students who invited me into their friendship group. I have become really close with most of them and can't wait to see where our friendship takes us next!

Home learning had lots of ups and downs. It was a different experience



but still fun. It was different waking up and going on a Google Meet. All of our parents have been really supportive and helped us through this year.

Last year we went on our first camp to Phillip Island. We had a really fun time doing the activities and being all together and we made quite a few memories.

When we did our leadership speeches, all of us were nervous. We had a lot of people that went for roles and everyone did a great job. We were all so confident in the way we spoke even if we were nervous.

Our final Year 6 year has been nothing like we thought it would be. It has been different in a good way though but still hard not being together for most of the year. We have had to battle through a really tricky year but we all did an amazing job.

I think that my Christmas won't be that different because I have a big family. It just might be that we can't see everyone in person, but we can always do a Zoom!

**Millie Harford**

... continued on back page

# Christmas after lockdown

Michelle Penson

As we have not had many parish activities due to restrictions over the past months, in this issue of the Eyrie we have asked some parishioners to tell us about their Christmas and others about their holidays. We hope you enjoy reading their stories.

This year certainly has been a very different one for us all. Words such as COVID, Corona Virus, lockdown, masks, social distancing, testing, tracing, quarantine, 5km radius, working from home, schooling via computer and zoom meetings all became part of our day to day vocabulary. Then eventually came double donut days and now 35 or more double donut days – how wonderful is relative freedom, sunshine and health.

Has this year ended on a high or low for you? What have we learnt from our time in lockdown?

For many there has been an increase in family time which has meant a trip to the local park, a walk in the parkland noticing more birdlife and a focus on simple pleasures. Many families played cards or board



games together. There has not been busy afterschool schedules with swimming, sports and other lessons. Some of these things seen as vital were just not able to be undertaken.

Now in this season of Advent in the lead up to Christmas we have the beginning of the new church year and it is also the beginning of our “life after lockdown”. The simple

pleasures of being able to once again go to the shops when you like, eat out, go for a drive, meet up with friends that you haven’t seen for some time. Re-connecting with our previous lifestyle is in a way a new beginning for us and one, we now don’t take for granted.

We may have taken stock of our lives and decide to do things differently from hereon. We may go back to old habits. Whatever we choose we will all be a little different after this year that was 2020. There are many who have lost their jobs and will find it hard to regain full time employment, there are many who will now work from home at least a few days a week. There are those not so lucky who may be mentally effected from time in lockdown and will require ongoing help.

May we all find the love, patience and understanding to reach out to those who may not have been as lucky as us this year and assist them by the giving of our time, with our good works, a friendly chat and our prayers.

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.



# Our Advent and Christmas

Kate Mathai

On the first Sunday of Advent when the Church officially begins the Christmas season, after Mass we traditionally put up our Christmas tree and Advent wreath and all the decorations around our home. We have a table centrepiece of the Infant Jesus which reminds us of His impending Birth at every family meal. Throughout Advent my daughters and I bake a selection of colourful spiced Christmas biscuits we adopted this custom after our years living in Germany, early in our marriage. I spend the two days preceding Christmas cooking meals and baking desserts for the celebrations on Christmas Eve and Christmas day which always include a Linzertorte.

On Christmas Eve, we celebrate with a special meal with Michael's side of the family, followed by exchanging of gifts. Gran's rule is that each child may open one gift that night but must wait until Christmas Day to open the others. We then attend St Mary's Church West Melbourne, to sing Christmas Carols, followed by Midnight Mass. It is usually well after 2 am when we arrive home, so we sleep in until 9am when the kids open their "Santa sacks".

Then it is off to my parents on a property just outside Ballarat and they have 9 children, as well as in-laws and numerous grandchildren and the first great-grandchild is on the way! All of us (and often other guests) share a well-planned, multi-course lunch to which each family contributes. After a Blessing given by one of my Priest-brothers, saying of Grace, and popping of Christmas bonbons, we have the most delicious spread of foods including roasted meats and vegetables, salads and



wines. The dessert buffet is preceded by the drawing of the curtains and the flaming of the plum puddings. For those not familiar with this old tradition, brandy is poured over the plum puddings and set alight. The kids delight in the beautiful blue flame it emits.

After much feasting around 4 pm most of the kids are bursting to open their gifts. My Dad puts on a Santa hat and delights in handing each family member their gift from the Kris Kringle mountain of presents around the Christmas tree. It is beautiful to watch the little cousins sharing new toys and everyone delighting at their joy.

After this comes cherry picking and we don old shirts (kept for the purpose of preventing crimson stains) and buckets and walk across to the orchard for a session of cherry picking. We climb up ladders and harvest the black and Napoleon cherries which are perfectly ripened by 25 December and feature

prominently in our Christmas fare. Meanwhile, some play tennis on the court, some of the boys play cricket on the lawn and groups of little people play happily with their new toys.

We eat the evening meal together and then around 10pm some families head home but most stay over. Christmas night is spent playing billiards, "murder in the dark", card games, piano playing, board games with the teenage cousins, groups conversing and more spirits for the adults! Those who wish, join in a family Rosary and we give thanks for another precious Christmas spent together. When we retire, well after midnight, nearly every room in the large house is filled with tired bodies as well as a tent or two on the lawn and I never cease to marvel at how my amazing Mum and Dad manage to pull this feat off every year.

# What makes Christmas special?



That's a question that you need to ask yourself as the festive season approaches. It could be the gifts you give, or the gifts you get. It could be the family you see or the friend you can be to those less fortunate. For me, no one Christmas stands out, but rather a treasure trove of memories that I am lucky to have collected over time.

Every year Christmas is a time filled with love, joy, and happiness as I celebrate this special time of the year, always with my family. We have never gone without a real Christmas tree and the smell of mountain pine, always fills me with such warmth, especially when we decorate it and place our personalised baubles on the tree. We have always been lucky enough to enjoy an extensive Christmas Day Lunch with all the trimmings and we never tire of sharing the jokes from

the Christmas crackers with the ones we love.

When I lived overseas, I enjoyed many 'White Christmases', and these memories of those unique times are very different to any Australian Christmas I have had.

My fondest memories of those in colder climates are:

- \*Watching the snow fall and the sparkle of freshly fallen snow – Yes it's true; no two flakes are alike.

- \*The fairy lights and Christmas Decorations in Bond St, London is such a sight to see.

- \*Mulled wine in the Austrian/German/British Christmas markets - necessary to keep the cold at bay.

- \*Sledding - You've not lived until you've blazed down the side of a hill on a plastic disk with no breaks!

- \*Cosy winter gear & Christmas jumpers -The uglier the better!

- \*Ice skating at the Rockefeller Centre in NYC -Worth it even though you need to prepare for the long lines and wait time.

- \*Christmas movies -Doesn't matter how bad they are!

With the 2020 Christmas season approaching, festivities begin early for my family and friends as we celebrate from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December. Christmas Day will involve watching with delight, my children waking up early to discover what Santa has left under the tree, followed by sharing Christmas lunch with my parents and siblings and giving thanks for the blessings of life and family after a very different year.

Jessica McKirkle



### My First Christmas

That first Christmas eve, I still remember the excitement I felt as our parents struggled to get all of us children into bed. Then, I remember the anticipation that I took to sleep with me, and which woke me up in the dark of early morning. I remember venturing very stealthily out of bed, so as not to disturb my older brother asleep in the bed next to mine nor my parents in the bedroom next door to ours. I crept slowly into the still-dark lounge room where the Christmas tree had been erected and decorated about a week before.

I was not disappointed. There, arranged around the tree, was a

seemingly massive collection of wrapped packages. By the faint, coloured glow of the lights on the Christmas tree, I tried to read the gift labels to see which of these promising packages were addressed to me. Unable to make out the writing on the labels and unable to reach the light-switch, I had to return to bed with mixed feelings – some of these wrapped packages must be for me - but which ones, and how many?

Christmas morning came eventually, as did the parental permission to start opening presents. I do not remember the particular presents that I received but I can recall the noise, laughter and mayhem of 5 children among the hastily discarded wrapping paper, string, ribbons and

sticky tape. I can recall the sensation of the scattered pieces of tinsel and the joy of opening a Christmas stocking with its comic book, metal clacker, noisy blower, small packs of lollies, lolly bangle, and other funny little toys. I believe I can still smell the scent of the paper, cardboard, and lollies.

Although it was about 64 years ago, my experiences then as a three or four year old have been with me every Christmas since. That sense of anticipation, excitement and uncertainty of what it all means colours my approach to the impending celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Bob Dowling

Christmas is such a special time of year for our family, made so much more special by the new traditions we have created since having our children and the long-held traditions that we have followed since our own childhood. It has always been important to us that we combine all of the best bits of our family celebrations, like our Christmas Eve mass with our extended family, but create some new ones which have mainly come in the form of the lighting display in the front yard, which seems to get bigger every year.

My husband and I both have small extended families, and since mine

are in the country and his are in the city we alternate where we spend Christmas day. Our Christmas Eve church service is always a significant part of our celebration as we return to the parish communities of our childhood to celebrate with our extended families. When we are in Melbourne, we always attend the St Francis Xavier service in Montmorency with my in-laws, where my husband and daughter were christened and where my husband and his siblings went to school. When we are in Wangaratta, we go to St Patrick Church which I attended as a child and where my husband and I were married. It is inevitably 40°C but



it wouldn't quite feel like Christmas if the air conditioner worked!

Lucas and Sara Fleming,  
Carmel Dexter, Xavier and  
Isla

As a child of immigrant parents, our Christmases growing up were always quite small unless it was one of the extra special years where we would celebrate with the relatives in South Africa. Now as a parent with a growing extended family, Christmases tend to be more reminiscent of those celebratory occasions spent with the overseas relatives – full of the loud chatter, excitement, chaos and the occasional sugar-fuelled meltdown (and that's just the adults!).

One of the elements to Christmas that remains stable however, is the

connection between family members – no matter how small or large our gatherings, and regardless of where we celebrate, there is always a strong sense of connection and festivity within our family – something my mum has strongly encouraged over the years. While this reflects something I value highly, it has in turn allowed me to experience a myriad of emotions on Christmas day over the years – when those values are not prioritised, it can certainly make for a stressful festive period. As such, a theme which features heavily (and one that I have learned to embrace) is to exercise

flexibility with my expectations about the big day itself. All too easily we can get caught up in the minor, trivial details of Christmas festivities, taking the focus off our core values.

After all that 2020 has thrown at us, I suspect (certainly in my family) there will be a strong sense of gratitude for the opportunity to connect and simply be together this year – a refreshing reminder to prioritise our values and focus on what is important.

Amanda Pepper, mum to  
Evie Pepper 2C

# A year of joys and challenges

Maureen Stella, Principal

It is hard to believe that we are almost at the end of the 2020 school year and what a year it has been for us all! I am sure 2020 will forever be etched in our minds and hearts in the years to come. I wonder what memories we will have of this year? Perhaps for many of us, our memories will be of gratitude and appreciation for the health/essential workers, memories of how much we missed being with our family and friends and even loved ones we lost during the COVID lockdown. For others, the memories may be of a slower way of living and thoughts of God, who walks by our side through life's joys and challenges. Whatever our memories, let us hope that we can move forward with optimism and hope for the future.

For our school community, this year



has brought both joys and challenges and I continue to be inspired by our students who bring such joy to our days with their funny comments, creative thinking and kind actions. I am grateful this year for everyone in our St John's community, from our engaging students, to our dedicated staff, to our generous parents, to our kind parishioners, all who have supported one another in words and actions. My gratitude also to Fr Mario and

Fr Joel whose spiritual guidance and support for our school is much appreciated.

To those who are leaving St John's community this year, my very best wishes are extended to them as they embark on a new direction.

I especially wish our 2020 Year Six students much success in the years ahead and hope they will look back on their time at St John's with many happy memories.

Wishing you all the joys of the Christmas season and may the true meaning of Christmas; the birth of Christ, be present in our thoughts and prayers, as we celebrate this special time of the year with our families and friends.

With warmest wishes,

Maureen Stella



Catherine Rossiter

Where have the last three years gone? I feel very lucky to have been part of the

St John's community.

During this time I have been so fortunate to be part of creating some wonderful sporting memories and achievements for both myself and our school. Most notably; HoopTime State Finals, Netball State Finals, Netball Victoria Schoolgirls Championships and the success of our interschool sports teams.

I have spent two wonderful years teaching in the classroom in Year One and this year, in Year Five. I have loved building relationships and connections with my students

and am so grateful for every single one of them.

The most notable experience and memory of my time as part of the St John's family will forever be my career highlight. From the moment I set foot in the school I was taken by the life journey of a very special student. At the age of four this young boy had experienced a medical condition which resulted in partial paralysis of the left side of his body. Over the years and through the incredible advocacy of his family and medical assistance he has made significant advancement and growth and now has a left side weakness. In 2019, upon investigation and together with his amazing mum we entered him in the 50m Freestyle Multi-Class event at the District Swimming Carnival. Fast forward and within a blink we were sitting at the State Finals watching this incredible young boy show just

how truly amazing he is. Finishing fourth at the State Finals felt like first and gave me my most precious memory of my time at St John's. It shows the determination, belief, support, advocacy and adaptability of a community that ensures everyone has the opportunity to reach their potential, participate and show the world what they can do. I will be forever grateful to have been part of this young man's story and hopefully when he is a superstar on the world stage he will remember me!

Thank you to the community of St John's for welcoming me and supporting me on this ride. To all of the students; you are amazing, you are incredible, you are important, you can make a difference and always remember you can do anything!

## Thank you to our departing staff members



**Rob Orme**

2020 has been a year of many firsts. My first year at St John's. My first year in a straight grade. My first

experience of Remote Home Learning. To say it has been a rollercoaster ride, would be an understatement! Despite the obstacles and challenges presented, I can honestly say that it has been both a professionally and personally rewarding year. The support the staff and leaders of the school provided, was much appreciated as we all navigated our way through a global pandemic. I thank each and every member of the St John's school community for making this year of firsts so truly memorable. I can't wait to see what 2021 has in store!

great part of Term 2 and then all of Term 3. Whilst we were not physically in the same room, being connected online still allowed me to develop great relationships with the students and I hope I was able to instil a joy of learning and fun into STEM & Digital Technologies.

The sports program on the other hand came to an abrupt halt. Once we were back onsite we were able to start up some intra school sports where students competed for their school house teams.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at St Johns. Whilst it will have only been a year as I am moving on to a school closer to my home, the community at St John's will be remembered by me fondly.



**Sebastian Gould**

It's strange to look back on 2020 as anything other than extraordinary. Being newly

orientated into a job means a lot of introductions, new names, and a lot of asking questions. My experience was made easy by the lovely school I was initiated into; students and colleagues wanting me to be happy and did everything in their power to make me feel welcome. Teaching 1G this year has been such a pleasure. Although my time at St John's has been short, I will treasure the time I have spent getting to be part of this great community.

community. I am inspired on a daily basis by the people of St John's and the love that they bring as we work together to provide a Catholic education for our students. This year students, parents, teachers and staff have had an opportunity to work in new ways, further developing educational partnerships and celebrating the efforts of all. I have admired the optimism and hope displayed by members of our St John's community through words and actions during this time. On a personal level, I have learnt to become more adaptable in my approach to planning ahead and working with others. Thank you to everyone for your support of me as a new member of St John's community. I wish everyone a safe, healthy and joyful Christmas as you celebrate this holy season with your friends and family.



**Nadine Jones**

I was a new staff member at St John's Primary School this year. My role is the eLearning Leader, STEM/ Digi Tech

Teacher and Sports Coordinator. Quite a few hats to wear!

From the first day that I came to the school, I was welcomed very warmly. The staff, parents and students were very polite and embraced me willingly into their community. It certainly made starting at a new school after 11 years at a previous school very easy.

During Term 1, I was able to see what St John's had to offer. The relationship the school had with Fr Mario, the connection to the church and the community and the great learning environment that these children are a part of. It didn't take long to feel a part of this environment. Unfortunately we were then forced into Remote Home Learning for a



**Alicia Burchfield**

This year I have had the privilege of teaching Year 3LB on a Friday. What a year it has been! I am so proud of

the way the children responded to every challenge they were faced during Remote Home Learning and I will definitely miss sharing our funny stories each morning we were together.

I have learned so much from my time at St John's and will miss being able to continue building the relationships I have made with staff, students and families. I will miss seeing the smiling faces of such wonderful children and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with.



**Elizabeth Whiting**

As I reflect upon my first twelve months at St John's, I feel blessed as a new member of this welcoming



# A potpourri of holidays

Claire Newsome

Looking back over the past two decades living in Australia, I have been fortunate to have enjoyed numerous holidays ranging from rural Victoria, Inter-state and overseas.

Having family and friends in New Zealand, I always enjoy the love of reconnecting with them in person, rather than through technology.

The delicious lunch whilst slowly cruising the Murray River aboard a paddle steamer, talking to the prawn fishermen as they unloaded their catch at Lakes Entrance, experiencing the beauty of a water filled Lake Eyre have all been memorable.

One of my longer special holidays took place up north in Western Australia where I enjoyed relaxing in beautiful Broome. Here I learned, among other things, about the history of the pearl divers, how the town was bombed in World War II, gained knowledge of the local indigenous people, sat in a deckchair at the historical outdoor cinema, walked where prehistoric dinosaurs had



walked and saw their huge fossilised footprints, dined on delicious seafood and experienced the sun setting while astride a camel strolling along Cable Beach.

One day I travelled north to Cape Leveque. On the way I visited an amazing Indigenous Community on the Dampier Peninsula and visited the Church of the Sacred Heart known as Mother of Pearl Church.

My holidays have meant enjoying the company of previously unknown folk, making new friends, seeing and experiencing new places, all adding to my happy holiday memories.

Explore Australia. It is such a fantastic diverse and beautiful country!

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# A Great Adventure

Maureen Howard

June 1973; Bruce's long service leave.

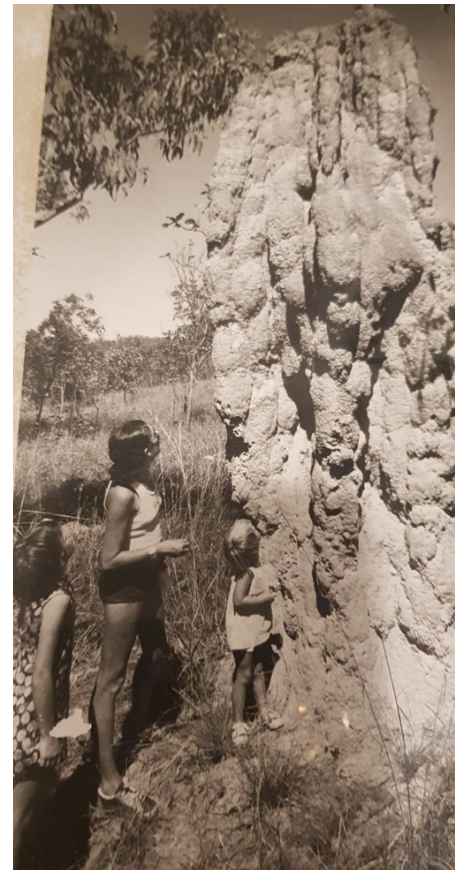
The old Ford Falcon Squire wagon loaded to the gunnels, with Caroline, Dallas and Jennifer we drove out of Eton Court, destination Groote Eyelandt via Mildura, Port Augusta and the old Ghan.

You couldn't say the start was auspicious, our petrol tank was milked during our first overnight stay at a caravan park in Mildura, but the spirit of adventure was still burning bright as we drove the long miles to Port Augusta to put the car on the train and then later that night changed to another train at Maree.

I balked at the sight of such an old train, but felt better when I saw the whiteness of the sheets. On the train waiters wearing white coats served dinner, lots of iceberg lettuce and beetroot and hard boiled eggs. We set off at a leisurely pace and settled for the night, next morning I remarked to Bruce "what a shame we've missed Oodnadatta", we hadn't at all, we arrived in Oodnadatta some hours later, had some time to wander and continued on, still at a very leisurely pace, getting a good view and appreciation for the outback of our vast land

We did have fun, the train was full of interesting characters and we knew we'd been going slowly when the conductor came and asked if we'd like to spend an extra night on the train when we arrived in Alice Springs instead of finding a motel in the middle of the night because it was running late, not unusual. We were budget travellers and stayed in on site vans, and camped in lots of places, spent the coldest night ever in Alice Springs. We then drove on to Darwin, some sealed road some dirt, road trains even then. One night we were settled to camp near Dunmarra, tent up, barbie going, and a dingo appeared, I refused to stay, so we packed up and drove on into blackness for well over three hours to reach Katherine. We found a motel with a note on the door indicating a spare room. Then on to Darwin, left the car at the home of one of Bruce's colleagues and flew off to Groote Eyelandt.

We had three great weeks with my youngest sister Kathryn and her husband Danny and our kids. Then came the long drive home, via Tennant Creek, Katherine, Mt Isa, Townsville and down the Queensland and NSW coast to reach our home sweet home again in Heidelberg.



Yes, there were a few fights along the way over who'd sit in the middle in the back and of course the question "are we there yet?" It was a memorable adventure for all of us and our older three (Anthony wasn't yet born) still talk about it 47 years later.



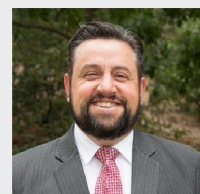
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# Down memory lane

Leela Cherubim

I am Sri Lankan born. I left my country in 1974 to work in Nigeria as a Woman Education Officer while my husband Reg furthered his studies in Law in England. He then joined me in Nigeria. From there we moved to Canada and finally to Australia, where we settled with our family. Although I was fortunate to live in several continents, for a holiday I prefer to visit my "home sweet home", not because I was born and bred there but because I feel Sri Lanka is truly "a pearl in the Indian Ocean".

Sri Lanka is a small island with a diverse climate. The north of the country is called Jaffna and I was born on a small island called Delft. The climate in the northern and eastern province is tropical. The southern region has more of a wet season and the middle of the island is The Hill country where the popular Ceylon tea is grown. That area is spectacular, filled with mountains, rivers and waterfalls.

Sri Lanka has a long history of more than 2000 years, having been ruled by the Dutch, Portuguese and British. They left their cultural influence behind when Sri Lanka got its independence in 1948.

I have revisited this tourist paradise multiple times, surrounded by blue ocean and sandy beaches, and the Royal Botanical Gardens are the best in South-East Asia. There are many beautiful sites, but my heart and soul reside in the island of Delft, where I have many nostalgic memories. I cherish the daily religious rituals, our Christmas carols and the environment.

Delft itself is a tourist destination, being part of Jaffna and closer to



South India. The only way to reach the island is by crossing the Indian Ocean on a small ship. I recall many times witnessing others and also experiencing sea sickness due to the choppy waters! The island is famous for its wild horses which were introduced by the Dutch Garrison for their horse cavalry, and over the years the horses multiplied and concentrated in one place.

The Dutch and Portuguese built many Catholic shrines and one of them, St Francis Xavier Church, has ancestral links with my family. The church was ruined due to civil war and my family was fortunate to help renovate the church and built a

grotto to reveal to the world that St Francis Xavier came to Delft before he proceeded to South India. The sanctuary was blessed and opened in August 2018 while I was present there.

Though Australia is my home now, memories of Delft and my time there are etched forever in my heart. I would love you all to someday visit my first home place Delft in Sri Lanka.

*Photo: Opening ceremony of the renovated St. Francis Xavier's church in 2018.*



# Fr Joel

Parish Priest, St John's Heidelberg

As Christians and as a society there's no doubt we make a big deal about Christmas, and so we should. Our Saviour, the Saviour of the world is born. One could argue that what we do is a bit over the top, and maybe they'd be right. But I figure if you can't celebrate something like Christmas in a big way, then you can't celebrate much. It's a time to be merry.

I think it's fantastic that even for those who don't profess any faith, it is seen as a time for family to come together and share each other's company as well as gifts. For almost everyone it seems Christmas is a time of gathering, a time of unity.

But for those of us with faith, we know it's more than that. But even with the belief and the knowledge that Christmas is more than turkey and tinsel, there is the temptation to see baby Jesus in the hay with the animals and the angels and get a little sentimental. Now the Nativity scene rightly captures our imagination and adoring the Holy Family in the manger is very heart warming and can invite us into real prayer. So being sentimental is fine - being moved emotionally by the

scene - but if it stays at this level then it's lacking. Christmas is in danger of being turned into a hallmark moment, which is nice at the time but quickly passes, with no real power or lasting effect. And that is something that Christmas certainly shouldn't be.

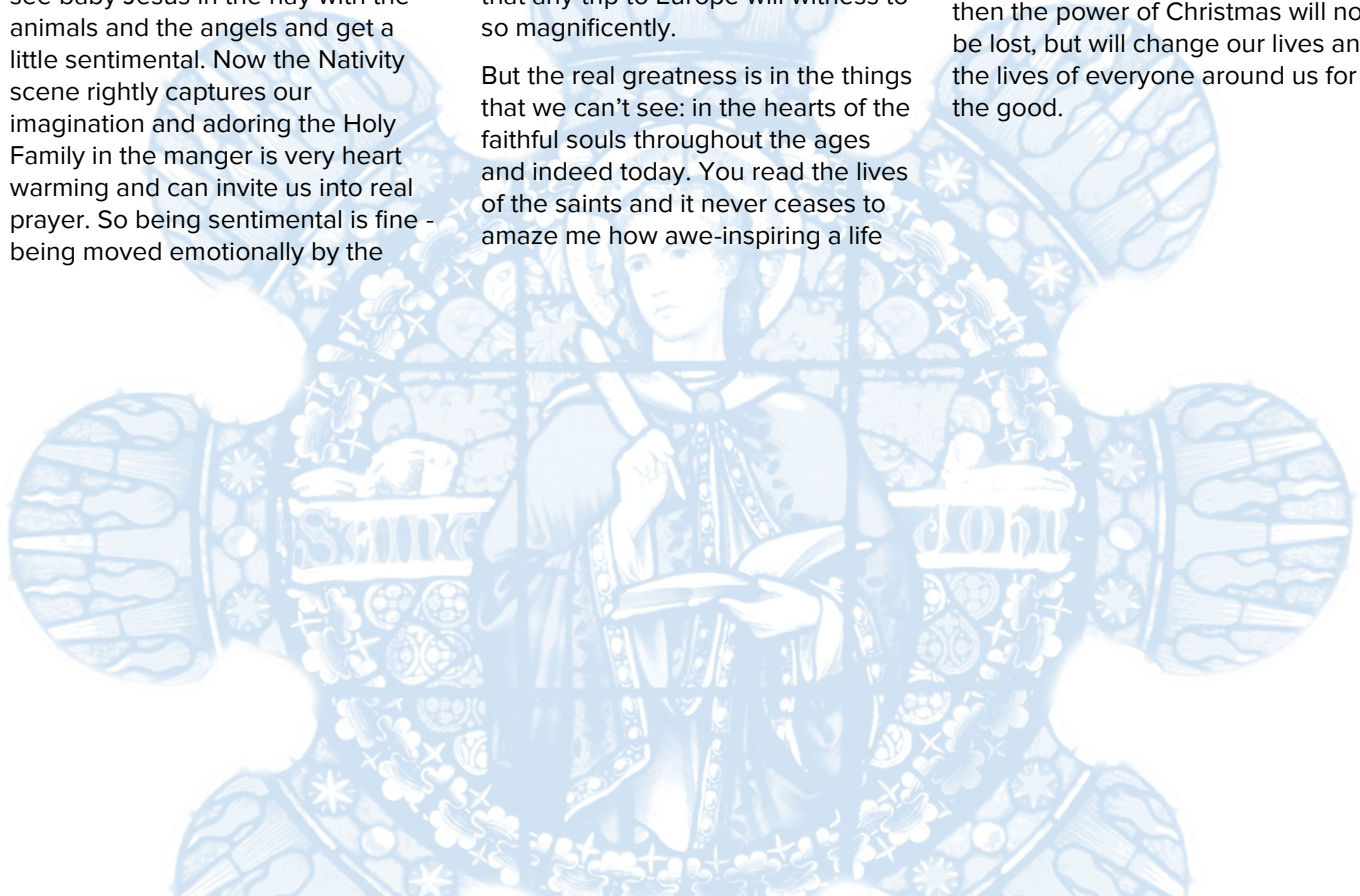
If we truly profess that God has come down in the person of Jesus, in whose name we are baptised in and by whom we profess as our means of salvation, then this event we recall each Christmas is packed with power.

We only have to have a lazy look through history to see the impact of Christianity on our world. When truly motivated by the love of God, we see the promotion of equality and the dignity of all people; the founding of schools, universities and hospitals; the awesome influence it has had on our culture in the art and architecture that any trip to Europe will witness to so magnificently.

But the real greatness is in the things that we can't see: in the hearts of the faithful souls throughout the ages and indeed today. You read the lives of the saints and it never ceases to amaze me how awe-inspiring a life

can be when lived when in complete love of God and surrender to his holy will. St John and each of the Apostles; St Dominic and St Francis of Assisi, founding religious orders 800 years ago that are thriving still today in their teaching and serving the poor. St Ignatius of Loyola and St Francis Xavier and the likes of St Damian of Molokai, missionaries spreading the faith to all corners of the world, bringing Christ to some of the most desperate and seemingly God forsaken places. And of course the saints all around us, devoting themselves to their families and communities, working tirelessly for the good of others and the glory of God each and every day.

They should serve to inspire us. They show to us that if we can acknowledge the greatness of this event and not let it simply come and go like the wreath on the front door, then the power of Christmas will not be lost, but will change our lives and the lives of everyone around us for the good.



# Our reflection on 2020

Millie Harford and Charlie Bourke, St John's School Captains

I have been at St John's in all my Schooling years so far, and I can tell you, it has been a rollercoaster! I've had so much fun here and it's sad to say goodbye. The amount of memories I've made is insane and I've made lots of nice and caring friends. They are always there when I need them and it's sad that I won't see some of them next year.

Some memorable moments were school camp, our leadership speeches and home learning. To be honest with you, I really didn't like home learning at all! I wanted to be at school seeing everyone when I knew I couldn't, although I did see lots of my friends going on walks and bike rides.

Last year all of the 5/6's went on school camp at Phillip Island. Some activities were canoeing and the giant swing. I had a really good time and I progressed on my friendship with lots of people.

When we were doing our leadership speeches last year I was so nervous!



When I finished my speech, I was so relieved, and I had no stress. A few weeks later the results came in, my teacher told me to go to the principal's office and then our principal Mrs Stella told me I was going to be St John's School Captain for 2020. I was so happy.

This year for Christmas my family and I are going to Geelong to see my Mum's side of our family. No Zoom! We have loved every minute at St John's and it will be sad to say goodbye. We hope we have left a lasting legacy!

**Charlie Bourke**

## St Vincent de Paul

Sally Tramontana



I would like to take the opportunity to thank the St John's Parish and School community and the members of the Heidelberg St Vincent de Paul conference for all the support over the last 12 months.

We have experienced challenges like no other but together we have achieved a lot - no request for assistance went unanswered, and we look forward to a new year with a fair degree of optimism.

We have raised a very generous amount of money, with the school community raising over \$1,800. As I keep saying the generosity of this parish is very humbling.

Once again thank you and I hope that you and your family and loved ones can enjoy a very safe and joyous Christmas and a new year full of hope, love, compassion, and peace.

## The Eyrie

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