

The Eyrie

St John's Catholic Parish Heidelberg



St. John's RCIA Candidates, Sponsors & Team Members with Archbishop Peter Comensoli St. Patrick's Cathedral

Harshini Thiyagarajah

RCIA candidate this Easter shares her journey with us:

"I first began my journey into Catholicism after meeting my now-fiancé, Brendan, and his family. Although I came from a Christian home, the Pentecostal churches I visited never had the depth I was searching for in my relationship with God. It was a "happy-clappy" time, but without anything to really grip onto.

The first Mass I went to was at St. Brigid's in Snake Valley (west of Ballarat). I was used to church being a concert-like experience where the music came second to the pastor's charisma. So it was

quite a surprise to be at this small, stripped-back service where the only focus was on God. I also noticed how joyous and full of love the priest was, and it was all so genuine.

This began to spark up questions within me as to how these churches could feel so different. So, when I started attending the Masses in Heidelberg and heard Father Vinh announce RCIA was starting up, I knew I had to join.

The classes themselves have been amazing. They have been a time where we can deep-dive into why we believe what we do and reflect on some of our most personal experiences. The team are also so caring and add a wealth of experience with their different back

grounds. I have never appreciated the depth of the Word as much as I do now, and can see that the difference in the churches comes from the reverence we hold for upholding God's word and living in His truth.

Now that Easter draws near, not only do I have a new-found appreciation for God's sacrifice in this time, but I am also full of excitement to become anew in the Church and feel all of God's mercy and love in ways I've never known before.

I am so grateful to everyone who has helped me in this journey, so thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Harshini

The Journey— RCIA Discovery & Reflection

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)

RCIA is intended for those who are unbaptised.

Part 11 of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults provides pastoral guidelines for those already baptised who express interest in entering in full communion of the Catholic Church

Chris Bouette an RCIA candidate shares his journey with us:

I grew up as the youngest child in a non-religious household. My mother was raised Catholic back in Scotland but had fallen away from the Church when she came to Australia. As it transpired, I was the only one of my siblings *not* to be baptised as a child. I was nevertheless drawn to Christianity - always believing there was something extra-natural to existence that the physical world could not explain. Without guidance, I was stuck at that nascent point for many years as I allowed the allures of the secular world to distract me. Then, two major events began to awaken my soul – I started a career in law enforcement, and I had a son.

Although I wasn't yet a Christian (officially), I swore my oath on a bible and always carried one with me in my patrol bag. I seldom read it, but something

made me keep it over the years as a constant companion.

My job soon brought me face-to-face with the problem of pain and caused me to reassess what I really believed and wanted for my family and my life. One day I decided to read the Gospels on the train before work and the words hit me like a thunderbolt. This led me on the subsequent couple of years where I studied the Bible, theology and discerned the faith.

One day at work, I overheard someone make a disparaging comment about Christians, and I felt something move me to respond: "*I'm a Christian*". It was the first time I had ever said it out loud. When I made that decision to accept Christ into my life, I felt a weight lift and I surrendered completely. To paraphrase St Augustine - my heart had been restless until it rested in the Lord.

Then came COVID. Having no church or community, I continued my study alone and consulted with a local Catholic priest about my journey. I was later baptised as a Catholic on my 40th birthday in a brief lull between COVID lockdowns. When I found St John's after the lockdowns, I felt immediately at home. I began attending Mass every week from the Easter Vigil Mass of 2022 and was soon approached about attending RCIA there.

This Easter I am expecting my second son, and I will be choosing my Confirmation name - Joseph, the patron saint of fathers. However, I can't help but think that there was some providence in my birth name – Christopher. Like my namesake, I had silently carried Christ with me all those long years. I like to think He also patiently carried me, forever guiding me home.

Chris Bouette

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 ANGLO-INDIAN COMMUNITY IN INDIA

Vernon Curtis

In order to understand this community it is necessary to look back at the history of India - at least for the last 500 years - when the Europeans first discovered India.

The Portuguese were the first to arrive in 1498, leaving their imprint on the sub-continent till 1961. Even today some legal aspects in the Portuguese colony of Goa (on the west coast of India) need to be referred to Portugal for ratification.

The Dutch, via the Dutch East India Company, followed in 1602, then the English, via the British East India Company in the same century and finally the French in 1664 via the French East India Company. The companies were initially set up as trading companies but with ensuing power struggles the British emerged as the major presence in India till independence was granted in 1947.

The French colony of Pondicherry (on the east coast of India) still has schools based on the French education system, with affiliations with France.

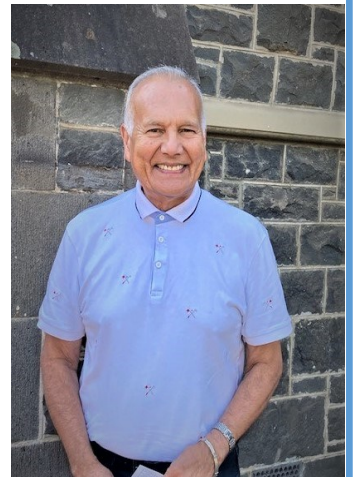
The English, in cementing their presence in India, envisaged a whole new class of Indians. Indians who were sympathetic to English ideology. In order to do so they actively opposed traditional Indian education to prevent Indians getting 'attached to their culture and traditions.' Lord Macaulay introduced his 'civilising mission' to ensure that this new class of Indians would be 'Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and intellect.' In pursuing this mission, the English were encouraged to establish roots in India which included marriage with the native Indians. The offspring of these unions were classed as 'Anglo-Indian'. In later years the term would encompass European heritage.

What did this mean in practical terms?

English-medium schools with an English curriculum were introduced. It was also a means of spreading Christianity. Churches were built around the country. The Railways were the largest employer of Anglo-Indians and as colonies sprung up in key

Vernon came to Australia in 1971. He worked as a secondary teacher of maths and science with the Marists and Good Samaritans. He came to St. John's parish in 2020.

When Vernon was asked if he would consider being a reader at our masses he said "yes" and enjoys volunteering in this ministry.



cities, Macaulay's vision was set in motion. Dance halls (Railway Institutes), movie theatres screening English and Hollywood movies, English fashion, music and traditions like balls and tea parties became common as did fashionable restaurants with English menus, gymkhanas (attributed to an Indian word for sporting venues like polo fields) and exclusive clubs. The legal and political systems were based on the English systems. Elitism became part of communal life resulting in the Anglo-Indians being considered second-class British citizens (though not in legal terms). However, the community flourished with members appointed to key positions in government and industry. The vision was partly realised.

The advent of Indian independence and the withdrawal of the formal British presence in India meant that the Anglo-Indian community had to survive on its own in a 'new' India.

As a result, many members of the Anglo-Indian community dispersed to English-speaking countries like Britain, Canada and Australia to continue to live a lifestyle that was more English than Indian. Of those choosing to live in India many adopted a more Indian lifestyle, acquiring proficiency in the vernacular and Hindi, the national language (compulsory in all schools) while maintaining their English language skills and in short identifying more as native Indian than Anglo-Indian.

With the passing of the next couple of generations the term Anglo-Indian will be relegated to the realms of history! **Vernon**

Welcome Fr Kishore Reddy Gade -Assistant Priest



Fr Kishore's journey to St. John's

"The sun doesn't forget a village just because it is small." African proverb

Homes are places where people can go for warmth, memories and comfort..., Husnabad (Pandilla) is where my home stands with natural surroundings and neighbouring a lot of Hindu villages. This tiny village is in the diocese of Warangal in the state of Telangana (India) and 140 km from Hyderabad, the capital.

My parents are Gade Rayappa Reddy and Saramma. I'm the second child in the family of three (2 boys and a girl). I was born in a very pious Catholic family and my family has a great devotion to mother Mary and infant Jesus. In the village we have a beautiful church named after St. Peter, the Apostle. **The village consists of forty families and all profess the same faith.** The Catholic faith is more than three hundred years old and all the traditional teachings of the church are practiced and nurtured. Farming is the main livelihood. We cultivate mostly cotton, chilli and paddy rice etc. The children from the village mostly move to Catholic educational institutions for schooling and higher studies.

As a result I left my home to Hyderabad and I did my primary and high school at St. Mary's High school, Secunderabad from 1985-95. It was a Boarding school and I spent ten years. I use to go home only twice in a year for Christmas and summer.

Being away from family was always a big unhappy feeling for me. But, it happens to all of us. A dot like place to a gigantic town. Do you all know the present population of Hyderabad? 10.6 million.

Nevertheless, it was a blessing in disguise. I reaped a bountiful harvest by obtaining good education by the grace of God. A scheduled and prayer life in the boarding inculcated in me a desire to become a priest. After finishing my high school I joined in a religious congregation called MSFs of St. Francis de Sales. This religious order was founded in 1845 in Annecy in France and at present it consists of fifteen hundred priests working in different parts of the world.

My formation: minor seminary (1994 to 97 at Fran Salian Vidhya Jyoti, Nidderdale), Noviciate (97-98 at Salesianum, Visakhapatnam. I made my first profession), Philosophy and Bachelor of Arts (1998-2001 at Suvidya College, Bangalore), Regency (2001-2002 at St. Francis de Sales school and Parish, Pitapuram-East Godavari), Theology (2002-2005 at St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary, Bangalore). After a brief period of diaconate ministry I was ordained a priest on 22/02/2006.

I worked as Assistant priest at Immaculate Heart of Mary's Church and as a teacher in SFS school at Tanuku (West Godavari

-India) for a year. As an assistant novice master in MSFs noviciate, Visakhapatnam a year. 2008 to 2016 worked as Pfarrvikar at St. Martin's Church, Reischach-Germany. As a teacher and on staff at SFS school, Pamidi (Ananthapur) a year. 2017 to 2020, Parish priest at Immaculate Heart of Mary's Church, Ghatkeswar (Hyderabad) and 2021 to 2022, Parish Priest at Our Lady of Lurdhu's Church, Karamchedu (Nellore). And now I'm here.

It is said, "Life without a hobby is like food without the salt." It is a hobby which makes living interesting. I don't have any complicated hobbies and interest. I like and love reading, travelling, updating my self with what's happening around the globe and gardening gives me immense pleasure. I speak four languages Telugu, Hindi, English and German. I enjoy sports and games. I played cricket a lot and but now enjoy watching it. I still remember 1987 World Cup held in India, in which David Boon top-scored (75 runs) and naturally Aussie won.

At last I can say that I'm happy to be a priest though at times it is challenging in today's world. The priesthood is really a commission to serve, a privilege to live and an opportunity to bless the lives of others. Being a priest is a blessing.

Thank you for your patient reading. God bless you all.

Fr Kishore Reddy Gade MSFs

St. Johns Acting Principal—Ms Elizabeth Whiting

Term 1



At St John's Catholic Parish Primary School we have had a smooth start to the school year. As school we continue to live out the gospel through our actions and words, showing respect for diversity and acceptance of differences. It has been wonderful to welcome new staff, students and families to our school community. A warm welcome to new staff to St John's - Maria Buttifant (Performing Arts), Frank Cotela (eLearning, Digital Technology & STEM) and Elise Mears (Year 4 teacher returning from parental leave).

I thank the staff of St John's for the many hours spent preparing their learning spaces and curriculum planning for the students' return to school.

At the start of the year we came together for our whole school Mass. This celebration was a special time for us to welcome new students, families and staff to our St John's Community. Our Year 6 student leaders received a blessing for their work as student leaders at St John's before proudly receiving their badges.

In March Catholic schools in Melbourne celebrated Catholic Education Week 2023 with the theme 'Forming lives of faith, hope and love in the light of Christ'.

During this celebration our school captains Toby and Pia, along with our Faith and Social Justice Action Team Members represented St John's at the mass for schools at St Patrick's Cathedral.

I thank our Acting Deputy Principal Connie Bandiera and Religious Education Leader Adam Salemme for accompanying our student leaders to this special celebration.

Thank you to our students, staff and families for their ongoing support as we work in partnership with the parish community in the best interests of our wonderful students, looking to 2023 with hope and optimism for a positive year together as a community of faith.



Social Gatherings - St. John's Tennis Club is not all about competition. Members enjoy getting together for social tennis. Each Sunday the courts are filled with fun and laughter by our many Vietnamese members, together with a number of non-Vietnamese members to enjoy friendly tennis and a Vietnamese lunch.

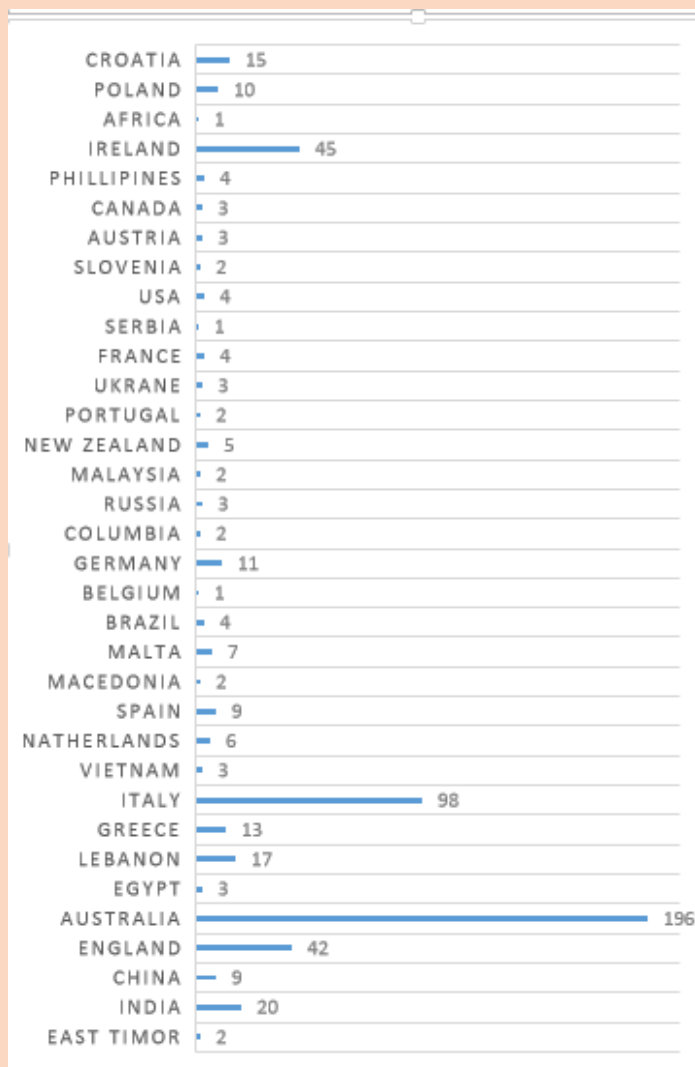
Another special occasion was when the Friday Social Players Group recently celebrated Des O'Brien's 80th Birthday. Des, a long-standing, and valued Past President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Life Member. (More Tennis Club news page 10).

Our Cultural Diversity

St. John's Religious Education Leader - Mr Adam Salamme

At St John's Primary School, our Cultural Diversity Student Leaders surveyed our student population to collect data about the cultural backgrounds of families that form our St John's school community. With over 30 countries and cultural backgrounds being represented at our school in 2023, we can describe St John's as being a multicultural school that is united through our Catholic faith. Results of survey below:

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AT ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL 2023



Our Year 6 students also shared their cultural background why they are proud of their cultural heritage.

Croatian- I am proud to be Croatian because of the beautiful islands, culture. - Remy

I am proud of the Croatian people, heritage and culture because Croatian music and dancing brings people together— Lucinda

Italian- I am proud to be Italian because of the yummy food and sights to see in Italy-Zoe

We are proud of our Italian backgrounds because people are always really nice, the food is great and the towns are beautiful. Layla & Amelia

Serbian- I am proud to be Serbian because of the small towns and farming grounds. The sunsets are also beautiful to look at - Noah

Poland- I am proud to be Polish because of the beautiful sites, culture and traditions.- Helena

Malta- I am proud to be Maltese because of the home made food and wonderful beaches that I can view in photos. Estelle

England -I am proud to be English because of the football and the lovely cities -Toby

Vietnamese -I am proud to be Vietnamese because of the food and the friendly communities—Ellie

Indian- I am proud to be Indian because of the food, music and dancing—Lann

Ireland - I am proud to be Irish because of the traditional music, dancing and storytelling.-Ben & Riley

Lebanese- I am proud to be Lebanese because the culture, dancing and music is fun, exciting and traditional. -Samuel

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Fr Michael Anghel

We thank Fr Michael for celebrating Mass for us while Fr Vinh took a well earned holiday.

In this article Fr Michael shares some of his journey to Catholicism and his plight as a refugee coming from Romania to Australia and being part of our parish family.

Fr Michel grew up in Romania in the spirit of Orthodoxy. As a child he was fascinated by the shine of the priest's vestments and the mystery that flows from inside the Altar. From as young as 4 he would use pieces of his mother's national costume and a candle to enact a service like church.

To become an Orthodox priest he had to sit 16 exams twice (due to Government corruption) but eventually entered the faculty of Orthodoxy and he married Maria in 1969. During his time as a priest in Romania he pastored two former Greek Catholic parishes which were forced to become Orthodox by the communist government. This is when he came into contact with the Catholic faith for the first time. He met a former Greek-Catholic priest who refused to become Orthodox so he worked on the railways but secretly held Liturgies for his people. The establishment of the communist regime brought great harm both to Romanian people and the Church.

In February 1988 because of some actions Fr Michel took against the Ceausescu communist regime he had to flee for safety to the Romanian Hungarian border and then into Hungary. He was there for two months in a semi-clandestine way looking to take refuge in Austria. To get to Austria he and his wife Maria climbed into a roof space in the Vinevaltzter international train and hid there, together with 5 other refugees for 44 hours lying still and quiet on metal supports within the roof space of the carriage (he says -"like being in a coffin").

They arrived in Vienna on the 1st May 1988 at 8pm in the evening and the Austrian police took them out of the carriage and then to a prison overnight before transferring them to the Traiskirchen refugee camp.

Fr Michael was then able to apply for refugee status and came to Australia. Here Fr Michael worked hard for some years as a labourer to be able to give his family food and shelter. He was given a book by a Romanian



Priest and in 1992 he tells of a dream of Our Lady and a symbol of the rock (being the Catholic Church). In the dream he was told by the voice three times to **"pray more"** but being a husband, father and working did not have much time. In Sydney he met up with Cardinal Clancy and expressed his desire to become a Catholic priest.

Fr Michel continued to work as a labourer and then in 1995 he had an accident at work that required a long recovery time so he had time to read. He also prayed and then sent a letter to John Paul II. A few weeks later he received a phone call from Cardinal Clancy and his prayers and hopes of becoming a Catholic Priest were heard. First though, he had to gain clearance from the Greek Catholic Archbishop of Romania which he did successfully.

On the 1st January In 1996 Fr Michel became a Catholic Priest.

In 1998 he was appointed Administrator and later Parish Priest of Our Lady of the Assumption, Homebush Parish in Sydney and was there for 18 years. Fr Michael and his wife Maria have 3 children and 10 grandchildren and moved to Heidelberg to be closer to them.

Fr Michael says in his retirement St. John's Parish Heidelberg has made him very welcome .

St. John's Tennis Club

During the past Spring Season, the Club was represented by a total of 20 teams competing across 4 different tennis associations:

The North Eastern Night Tennis Group where we fielded 3 Ladies, 1 Mens, 7 Mens' Vets and 1 Mixed Team. This was a very successful season with 9 of our 12 teams reaching the finals. 4 teams finished Runners-Up and 2 were Premiers. In Vets Section 5, we had 2 teams competing and both went on to contest the Grand Final in an exciting, friendly match.

The Thursday afternoon Metro Masters' Competition in which we fielded 3 teams.

The Eastern Region Tennis Association where we had 2 teams in the Saturday afternoon competition.

The North East Junior Tennis Association saw SJCTC represented by 3 teams – 1 Girls, 1 Boys and our young beginners Mixed Team. We are very pleased to report that all 3 teams reached the finals with our Girls 2 Team finishing Runners-Up and Boys 5 Premiers. We wish these 3 teams well as they continue on in the current season. Over the past few years with many of our junior players ageing-out of junior competition it is pleasing to see quite a number of them form new teams, or join existing ones in the adult competitions. The Club continues to grow and

this year we have a new young Mens' Team entered in the **Diamond Valley Thursday Night Competition**



*Boys 6 Premiers
Mia Zara Sierra Grace Annie Esther
Massimo Ivan Domenic Bubloo Joel
Benjamin with Coach and Junior
Coordinator, Johnny*

Mens' and Womens' Singles Club Championships 2022

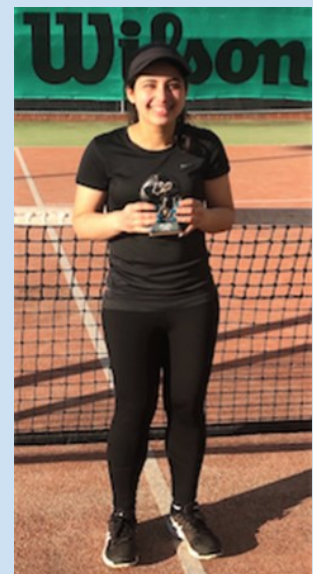
After not being possible for the past two years, the Club Championships were eventually held over an extended period due to the inclement weather. The Mens' Final saw Joshua Meng and Coach Johnny Paci put on a wonderful display of hard hitting and exciting tennis, enjoyed by the many who came along on the evening of Friday 11th Nov. to cheer them on.



*2022 Mens' Singles Runner-Up, Johnny
with our Champion, Joshua*

The Womens' Championship

The Women's' Championship also saw terrific tennis and exciting matches, notably the semi-final between Julie Thorn and young junior Esther Meng, which Julie won in a super tie-break. Julie went on to play Claire Candido, with Claire winning in a friendly, keenly contested final.



*2022 Womens'
Singles Champion
Claire Candido*

Forthcoming Events

In September, this year the Club will be holding another Dinner Dance to be held at the La Trobe Golf Club, and we look forward to the Stephen Smith Friendship Tournament being back on later in the year.

St. John's Tennis Club looks forward to a busy and active 2023, both on and off the court!

Fr Vinh Nguyen

Parish Priest, St John's Heidelberg

Everyone has his/her own story to tell and one's journey in life is unique. However, sometimes we walk together in the same way on some parts of our journey. Sometimes we begin our journeys from different directions but reach the same destination.

Here in this community of St John's, we journey from many directions, come from many different backgrounds, but together we share our differences and diversity in this place.

I guess you probably still remember that on the Second Sunday of Lent after 10:30am Mass we had morning tea with great joy to formally welcome Father Kishore who joined our parish community, to be among us as Assistant Priest. In his welcoming speech, Kevin Andrews, on behalf of the parish community, linked the words of God on that Sunday about the journey of Abraham to the promised land as God's invitation. Abraham though, had no idea where he would be led to, he completely put his trust in God and followed God's direction. Similar to the journey of Abraham, Kevin pointed out that Fr Kishore and myself both have made their journey and come to serve at St John's Heidelberg. We also had to leave behind everything including our families and home countries and come to be with you here at St John's.

I suppose that all of us in some way or another sacrifice and leave behind many things, and journey many ways to come here to build up our community of St John's Parish Heidelberg. This community has become our home, our 'promised land' where we can together build up our community of unity, of love and of service to one another, as the Lord God invites us to do.

As I write this we are about halfway through the Lenten season, our journey towards Easter-the celebration of the Lord's resurrection. Through this special time of the year, God reminds each of us on this journey of following Him that there have been many challenges. In spite of the many times we are unfaithful to Him and fail to follow him, God is always with us. He is always faithful to us and His grace helps us on our journey so that we can stand up and try again and again after each time we fall and come back to Him and become stronger.

May this Easter celebration bring each of us, our family and our parish community a renewal, a new life and real peace of the Risen Lord so that we too, may bring his blessings and his peace to all we meet in our daily living.

Fr Vinh

The Eyrie

OUR TEAM

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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.

Your input most welcome

Please contact the parish secretary 0394571066

UPCOMING EVENTS

Lenten Service and 2nd Rite of Reconciliation

Monday 27th March at 7pm

Holy Thursday

Mass of the Lord's Supper

6th April 7.30pm

Good Friday

Stations of the Cross

7th April 10.30am

Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Passion

7th April 3pm

Holy Saturday

Morning Prayer in the church

8th April 9am

Easter Vigil

8th April 7.30pm

Easter Sunday

9th April

Mass 8.30am & 10.30am

(no evening mass)