

# ECHO



The magazine of ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PARISH HEIDELBERG

OCTOBER 2015

## MESSAGE FROM FR MARIO

Dear Parishioners, Visitors and Friends

Scripture tells us the story of a God who is love and who, through this love, reached out to us so that we could get to know him. The opening of the letter to the Hebrews reminds us that *in the past* God had spoken to his people on many occasions and through a variety of messengers, *in these last days* God has spoken his full and final Word, Christ. The books and stories in the Old and New Testaments are *proof* to us of this great love of God.



This year I had the privilege of visiting Uluru. I had long wanted to visit and pay homage to this sacred space in the spiritual tradition of Australian indigenous inhabitants; for me this was a kind of *pilgrimage*. As we walked around this monumental rock formation and took in the geological explanation of its existence and the *Tjukurpa* creation stories and morality of the *Anangu* peoples, we were shown the different *Tjukuritja*, signs and marks left by these ancestral beings as proof of *Tjukurpa*. I was amazed at the similarity between our Bible stories and the proof we find there of God's immense love for us, and the *Anangu* peoples' reference to these *Tjukuritja*.

The similarity between our religious culture and the culture of our Australian indigenous does not end there. It is witnessed in a very special way on the Easter Vigil when we light our fire

(the Easter candle) and sit around it enjoying its light and its warmth as we narrate these stories of God's love for us, his people. Indigenous people too gather around their fires and narrate their *Tjukurpa* and dreamtime creation stories, handing them down from generation to generation. After all, for centuries, our own scriptural tradition too was an oral tradition!

After Uluru I travelled through Alice Springs, Brisbane and Manila, on to a small parish community in the province of Bataan, north of Manila. Here I stayed with an old and respected friend of mine who is responsible for the parish of St Catherine of Alexandria, in Pagalanggang (Dinalupihan district).

Fr Joe has been journeying with this community for the past ten years. This is a poor agricultural community where often parents have to leave their children with their grandparents while they go overseas to try to find a job to maintain their family. This causes great disruption in the upbringing of the family.

Apart from offering spiritual support to his community, Fr Joe has also been trying to find a way to help younger generations build a better future for themselves. *It is better to teach a poor person to fish than to feed him!* If one simply reaches out into one's pocket and hands out food, the person might be satisfied for one day but will come back next day, if you teach that person a trade, then he can earn his own living and move forward on his own. Using this philosophy, Fr Joe has created the *Jose Depiro Kabataan (youth) Orchestra*, he provides the children in the parish with instruments and with teachers to teach them music, hoping that one day they might be able to use their musical knowledge to advance themselves and their families! (Facebook users can follow this youth orchestra on: <https://www.facebook.com/KabataanOrchestra>)

Apart from enjoying the company of Fr Joe and the people in his parish, I was also truly inspired by this energy and enthusiasm as he reaches out proactively to these young people in his parish.

Fr Mario

**THE NEW PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS**

The new Parish Council members: John McGrath, Mary Harty, Chris Ratnayake and Bob Dowling will take their place with existing members Maureen Hegarty, Leela Cherubim, Kate Mathai and Lesa Meese for the first meeting of the new council this month.

Plans are afoot for a Parish Picnic in November, a Fete in March 2016 and building works for the parish house meeting rooms. We also hope to have an overhead screen in the church to enable us to move forward with technology to assist us in our celebrations of the Mass.



**FROM THE OUTGOING MEMBERS OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL**

– Bill Barnes, Catherine Aloise (Andrews), Ronnie Maloney and Michelle Penson. It has been an honour and privilege to serve as your representatives, we are grateful for the support you give to our wonderful parish. We know you will give your full support to the new members of the council you elected this year as well as the members elected last year. There is no election in 2016. Then in 2017, four vacancies will occur as the members elected in 2014 retire.



**OLD PARISH PHOTOS WANTED PLEASE!**

Some time ago we asked for anyone who had old photos of past / or more recent parish events. We have plans for a book next year for our 165<sup>th</sup> year. We need your help and ask that you share any photos of happenings in the parish or school that you have in photos. The items will form part of our history collection. We will take good care of them, copy them and return them to you. Please put them in an envelope with your name and address and drop them into the parish office.

*Hope this grabbed our attention and you can help us out!*

**THE 5:00PM SUNDAY MASS -  
CHOIR AND MUSIC MAKERS**

warmly welcome anyone who would like to contribute voice or instrument to the group.

Contact Helenka:  
helenapasztetnik@gmail.com



St John's welcomes singers and instrumentalists who would like to contribute to the musical groups in any way.

Contact Sr Loreto at the Parish Office