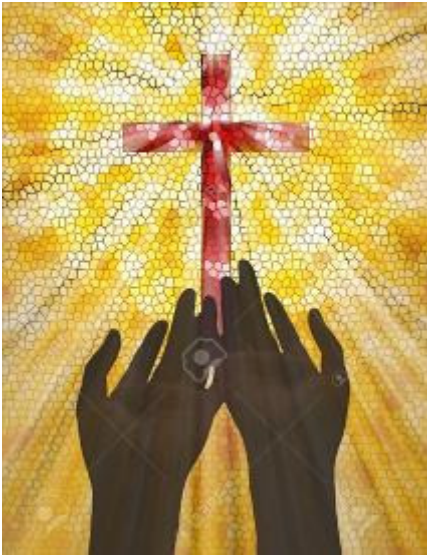




MARCH 2016



## Easter Blessings 2016

Dear Parishioners and Friends

*Merciful like the Father*

As we prepare for the celebration of the Lord's passion, death and resurrection in this Jubilee Holy Year of Mercy, it is important once again to reflect on God's infinite source of mercy.

God is perfect and in God everything is in perfection. When we talk about God's perfect justice we also need to mention his perfect mercy. God's justice is seriously tempered by his mercy. While a human judge can only do justice by what can be discerned by limited human resources, and we know that at times this justice can be imperfect, God can see beyond outward appearances. God's perfect justice can see the inmost parts of our own

being and hence his merciful justice is always perfect.

The gospel according to John reminds us that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life (Jn 3:16). This mystery happened in a special way at Christmas when the Son of God took on our own human flesh; it happened also when the Son of God was prepared to give up his life and die on the cross. If anyone wants to know how much God loves us, we only have to look at the cross! St Paul reminds us that God not only became human, but he actually lowered himself to taking on the shape of a slave, dying on the cross for our salvation.

We cannot overstate God's infinite merciful love. Yet this is not the end of the story. Pope Francis chose as the motto for this Holy Year of Mercy the phrase: Merciful like the Father. This is a call for each one of us to mirror God's mercy among our sisters and brothers. It is very easy to judge those we think are less holy than us. In the gospel Jesus often criticizes the Pharisees and the scribes for the way they judge the tax-collectors and the sinners. We are all equally sinful and we all equally depend on God's merciful love for us. Our role is to be open and welcoming. In the parable of the Prodigal Son the Father tells the older son: All I have is yours. The return of the prodigal son will not in any way impact on what is already ours.

God's mercy is infinite and there is enough of it to go around for all of us sinners.

Let us be merciful like the Father!

Fr Mario





### Christmas 2015

St Johns had wonderful celebrations at Christmas with four families coming forward to give us a Mary, Joseph and a "Baby Jesus" in our procession in. This adds much colour and joy to our celebrations and takes our minds back to Jesus' actual birth and the joy that came into the world on that day. We thank all the families for their contribution to our ceremonies as well as all those who prepared the church, and the gym and all who were a part of these celebrations.

In the photos: Rachael, Yijun and baby Scarlet Chan at the midnight Mass.



### EASTER CEREMONIES AND MASS TIMES

#### 24th March Holy Thursday

7:30pm Mass of the Lord's Supper and washing of the feet followed by Adoration and Evening Prayer at 10:00pm.

#### 25th March Good Friday

11:00am—Stations of the Cross in the church and school grounds

3:00pm—Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Passion at OLMC Gym on Yarra Street

#### 26th March Holy Saturday

9:00am—Morning Prayer

8:00pm—Easter Vigil

#### 27th March Easter Sunday Masses

8:30am, 10:30am (no 5:00pm Easter Sunday)

### Dates in the Parish Calendar

#### April

11th April—School Term Two starts

#### 17th April—Parish 165th Anniversary

**10:30am—Special Mass** Giving thanks for our heritage.

**Followed at 11:30am Parish Picnic 165th Anniversary BBQ**

25th April—Anzac Day (Monday)

#### May

**Wednesday 25th May 9:00am-10:00am**

**St John's biggest morning tea**

(proceeds to the Cancer Council)

*Parents, grandparents, teachers, parishioners and friends all welcome.*



## Bishop Mark's visit to St John's— February 2016

Bishop Mark spent a week in our Parish in February and was impressed with all that we have happening in the parish.

He delighted us by explaining the various items that a bishop wears. Christian Ratnayake, in the photo below, is seen wearing the bishop's mitre and cross.

Bishop Mark met with many of the groups in our parish including a morning tea with parishioners who visit the hospital and assist with the Austin Mass on the third Sunday of the month.

He gave the sacrament of the sick to people at Clevedon Terrace with Sr Loreto and Fr Raj to assist him in the Mass at the nursing home.

Bishop Mark admired our beautiful church and commented on its heritage and its size. He gave his blessing to the use of the OLMC gym for our larger celebrations which enable us to come together as one parish family.



Bishop Mark with some of St John's Hospital Visitors

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### Jubilee Holy Year of Mercy

In this year of Mercy here in Heidelberg we give thanks for the Sisters of Mercy. Founded by Catherine McAuley in 1831 the Sisters of Mercy started in Dublin to provide general education and education in faith for the poor in Ireland.

At the invitation of our parish priest, in 1910 the Sisters of Mercy commenced our school. Whilst we no longer have sisters teaching at the school we give thanks for all those wonderful women who did in the past. Their love of the Lord, their dedication to doing his work in our school and parish has greatly enriched our parish life over many years.

We give thanks for the sisters of Mercy living amongst us today and are now retired; some who spent years teaching here and as missionary Sisters of Mercy overseas.

We are blessed to have Sr Loreto tirelessly working as our pastoral associate visiting the sick and elderly, organising children's liturgy and the sacramental program as well as sharing her musical talents to enrich our weekly Masses.

Today, the main ministries of the Sisters of Mercy are in education, community service and health, including the Mercy Hospital for Women in Heidelberg.

Some sisters are educators, theologians, scripture scholars, liturgists, writers and publishers, researchers, archivists, historians, musicians, artists, bioethicists, ecumenists, canon lawyers, lawyers and advocates for justice. They are a talented bunch of women who give their lives to the service of others.

The Sisters of Mercy are advocates for people with no voice and for those seeking justice at home and beyond.



What a great Fete. St John's family community working together and having fun. Thank you to all who took part.

