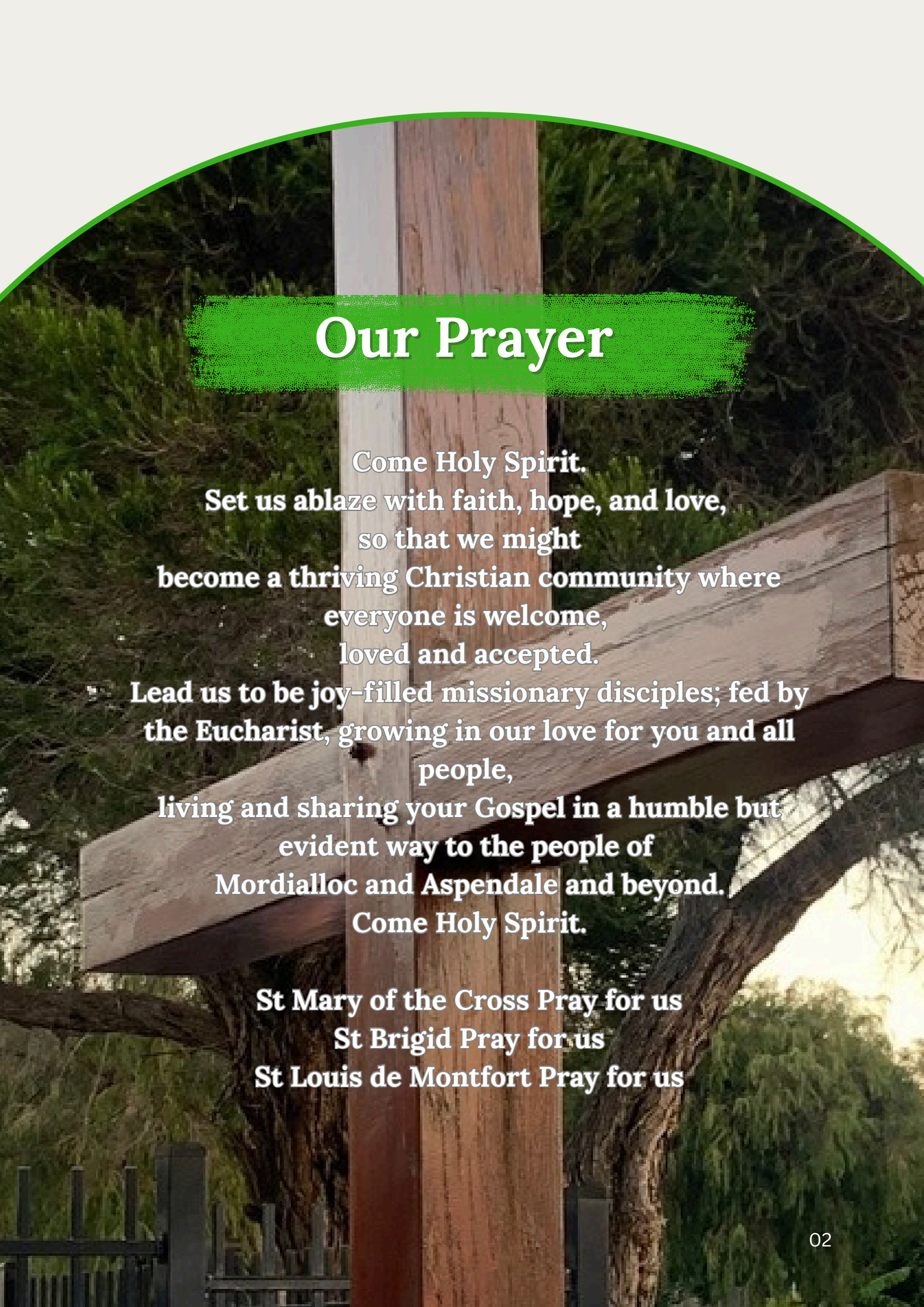




MISSION PLAN



**St Mary of the Cross
Catholic Parish**
EMBODYING CHRIST'S LOVE



Our Prayer

**Come Holy Spirit.
Set us ablaze with faith, hope, and love,
so that we might
become a thriving Christian community where
everyone is welcome,
loved and accepted.
Lead us to be joy-filled missionary disciples; fed by
the Eucharist, growing in our love for you and all
people,
living and sharing your Gospel in a humble but
evident way to the people of
Mordialloc and Aspendale and beyond.
Come Holy Spirit.**

**St Mary of the Cross Pray for us
St Brigid Pray for us
St Louis de Montfort Pray for us**



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The purpose of this Plan

This plan builds on our “Opening the Door’s to Missionary Discipleship” parish renewal journey which we launched in May 2021. We continue an intentional journey to create a parish that is welcoming and inclusive, that reaches out, a community that offers faith opportunities where all can grow in a deepening relationship with God and each other, where the weekend experience is prioritised and where we are all called to use our gifts to honour God and serve each other in love.

Our Mission Plan lays out our Parish Mission, Vision and Values and the four core focus areas that underpin our mission and vision.

This plan does not outline specific goals or deadlines, however it does outline broad priorities under the four focus areas (refer pages 9 - 11). Our Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Leadership Team set yearly goals and specific actions that help us to realise our vision.

Since May 2021 two major events have taken place in the Catholic Church. The Fifth Plenary Council in Australia in 2021/2022 and the Synod on Synodality for the global catholic Church under the pontificate of Pope Francis from 2021-2024. Synodality as Part 1 of the Final Synod Document (October 2024) is defined as:

“a path of spiritual renewal and structural reform that enables the church to be more participatory and missionary, so that it can walk with every man and woman, radiating the light of Christ.”

Pathways for the implementation of the Synod are now underway (2025-2028) and several dioceses in Australia have undertaken local synods to discern the practical, local applications. This Plan does reflect some of the recommendations from both events, whilst we await the Melbourne Archdiocese response and planning expected early 2026.

Honouring our legacy

Our parish history dates back to 1949 with the establishment of St Brigid’s, followed by St Louis’ in 1970. Everything we do now and into the future is built upon the wonderful legacy of those who have gone before us.

We acknowledge and give thanks for this foundation and the parishioners and clergy for their commitment to living the Gospel and their enduring ministry here in Mordialloc and Aspendale.



The Challenge

Many people in Australia today experience deep spiritual hunger and seek answers to life's big questions. They might be dealing with personal struggles, loneliness or a sense of emptiness.

Jesus' message of love, peace and compassion can help, yet we have a culture that is increasingly distrustful of and uninterested in God, church and faith.

Despite healthy numbers in our two catholic primary schools, our RCIA program, our catechesis program and families requesting baptism for their children, we see fewer families and individuals engaging with the parish community. What causes this dis-connect and how can our parish address it?

The answer lies in the mission Jesus gave to each of us and our personal commitment to get behind our Mission Plan with support and action. Are you prepared to invest in this community, to joyfully express co-responsibility for the life and mission of the parish?

Having researched numerous parishes and ministries both locally and overseas, those who are healthy and growing have some common elements. These are outlined as our four key focus areas on page 8.

The Mission of the Church is OUR Mission

After his death and resurrection and before Jesus ascended he gave his disciples this mission:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them everything that I have commanded of you, and know that I am with you until the end of time.
Matthew 28:19-20

Although Jesus said this almost 2000 years ago, it remains relevant today because it defines the mission of the Church—to share the timeless, good news of the gospel, baptise believers, and help and accompany all to follow Jesus' way of life. We must stay focused on the mission Jesus gave us, it is central to why we exist as a parish.

This command from Jesus is not just for the clergy and religious orders. All who are baptised have this mission. For the continued renewal of our parish, we must all play our part in actioning it.

Our role as members of our parish

The parish plays a vital role in offering the experience of God's eternal love, mercy and forgiveness. The celebration of Mass is the central act of worship and expression of our faith, celebrating the Eucharist in community.

The parish community can provide love, care and support for each other as we navigate life. The parish can be a place of welcome and belonging, as well as refuge and hope. The parish can offer a space to learn more about faith and Jesus' teaching and how to apply them in our lives. The parish can provide avenues for service and outreach to those in need.

When parish members embrace these things, get involved and see them as their role and responsibility, we answer the mission that Jesus gave us to make disciples. It also demonstrates our commitment to love God and love others.

"Making disciples" can sound intrusive. But it's not about imposing, it's about gentle invitation, a smile and hello to a stranger, asking how someone is and really listening to the answer without judgement. Praying with and for one another when initial trust is established. In these authentic conversations and in praying, God is always there.





Our Mission

Love God. Love Others. Make Disciples

Our Vision

We are God's Lighthouse for Melbourne's bayside, personally inviting ALL to journey with Jesus, being loved and welcomed, finding direction, personal healing and their unique place in God's family.

Our Values

Positive Action

Living the Gospel by word and action to change lives & bring people to Jesus.

Compassion

*"Never see a need without doing something about it."
Mary MacKillop*

Accountability

We are accountable to each other in a spirit of trust, transparency, honesty & respect.

How will we succeed in our mission to make disciples?

We have four key areas of focus that work together:



Offer an exceptional weekend experience

An experience of God's love and a welcoming community, with the weekend mass offering authentic hospitality, enlightening homilies and uplifting music under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



Grow Wider

Listen & respond to the wider community with love, care, mercy & welcoming acceptance. Welcome new people with open arms. Encourage parishioners to invite newcomers to come and see.



Grow Deeper

Grow in our faith & relationship with Jesus, living our lives in accordance with his teaching. Our Discipleship Pathway provides clear opportunities for all.



Serve Ministry

We invite, encourage and support everyone to serve in a parish ministry, using the gifts that God has given to each one of us.

The following pages outline broad priorities under the four focus areas. Our Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Leadership Team set yearly goals and specific actions that help us to realise our vision. We encourage you to speak to a member of the Parish Leadership Team or Parish Pastoral Council if you have ideas or would like to know more.



The Weekend Experience

An experience of God's love and a welcoming community, with the weekend mass offering authentic hospitality, enlightening homilies and uplifting music under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Priorities:

- Recruit Welcome Minister Leader - Coordinate Invitation & Hospitality Team
- Friendly and engaging greeters - before and after mass
- Knowledgeable and informed hosts to assist people at the Welcome Desk
- Spirit of warm hospitality - regular cuppas and special events
- Welcoming and tidy environments
- Music Leader - Coordinate choirs, practice, recruitment
- Music that uplifts and inspires
- Preach a unified message
- Children's Ministry Leader and Team
- Exceptional children's ministry offerings at different levels
- Quality engaging and inviting online experiences - livestreaming of masses, website, social media

Grow Wider

Listen & respond to the wider community with love, care, mercy & welcoming acceptance. Welcome new people with open arms. Encourage parishioners to invite newcomers to come and see.

Priorities:

- Conduct research with school families to understand reasons for lack of parish engagement
- Address findings with the goal that the schools become an integral part of the parish community
- Encourage all parishioners to nurture relationships with people who aren't church-goers - ACORN Spiritual Practice*
- Create soft entry points for parishioners to invite friends to e.g. parish BBQ, movie night, pet blessing, healing mass, Alpha/The Search a Small Group or Parish Group
- Implement a newcomer engagement path - accompaniment model
- Continue and widen the Accompaniment Journey approach for children's preparation and initiation of Sacraments (govt. schools)

*Acorn is a movement that seeks to connect Christians with the work God is doing in others through caring conversation. Acorn does this through missional discipleship, by involving some Christian friends and sending them out to try the acronym A-C-O-R-N; Ask, Call, Obey, Report, Notice.

Grow Deeper

Grow in our faith & relationship with Jesus, living our lives in accordance with his teaching. Our Discipleship Pathway provides clear opportunities for all.

Priorities:

Discipleship Pathway

Opportunities for ongoing faith formation:

- Different moments in the journey of discipleship (beginning, developing and mature)
- Different life-stages (young people, families, singles, elderly etc.)
- Recruit Discipleship Leader

Prayer and Renewal

- Retreats and sabbaticals particularly for leaders and teams
- Open churches for prayer, reflection and worship outside of usual hours

- Be a parish of small groups helping people to share their faith, learn and support each other
- Recruit Small Group Leader and coaches
- Embed the practice of Spiritual Conversations in parish groups
- Periodic testimonies of faith and personal relationship with God at masses

Serve Ministry

We invite, encourage and support everyone to serve in a parish ministry, using the gifts that God has given to each one of us.

Priorities:

- Help people discover their gifts e.g. "Called & Gifted" Discernment Process or Clifton Strengths
- Regular formation and training for all ministries
- Recruit Ministry Leaders - Liturgical, Discipleship, Hospitality and Care
- Serving those in need - encourage new members for Vinnies, JAG
- Change the paradigm from a feeling of duty to genuine joy and passion to serve - empower people, encourage ideas for improvement

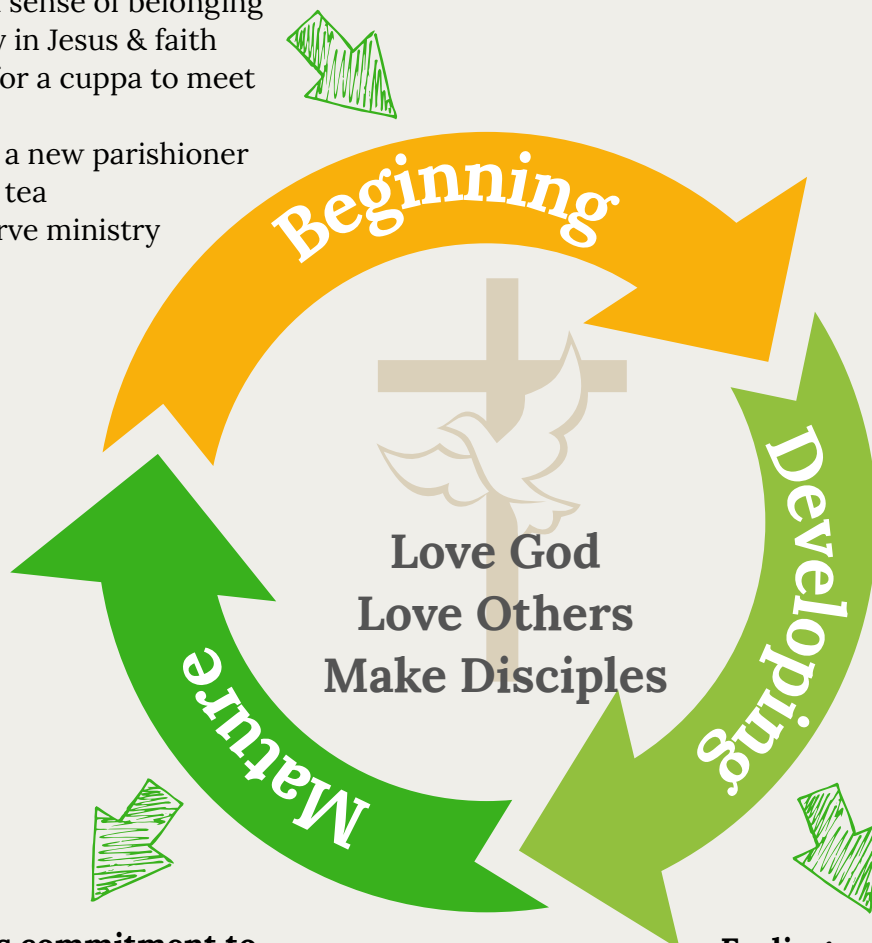


Discipleship Pathway at St Mary of the Cross Parish

Most parishes tend to assume that everyone who is attending Mass is a missionary disciple. This is often not the case. Many Catholics have been sacramentalised but have never been evangelised. They have never said a life-changing 'yes' to a loving and personal relationship with Jesus. Many have never had the opportunity to. Here is our Discipleship Pathway to help each of us grow in faith and relationship with Jesus wherever we are on the journey.

Connect, build trust and relationships

- Feeling a sense of belonging
- Curiosity in Jesus & faith
- Staying for a cuppa to meet others
- Come to a new parishioner morning tea
- Join a serve ministry



Conscious commitment to follow Jesus & accompany others

- Hungry for the sacraments, for scriptural teaching, for growth in prayer and for a deeper spiritual life
- Inviting others who are searching, regularly praying the *ACORN prayer
- Stepping up to lead Serve Ministries, Small Group leader and coach
- Active involvement in Parish Groups

Feeling open to spiritual & personal change through God

- Seeking to know why God is calling; Thinking about a deeper purpose 'Why am I here?'
- Attending Alpha/The Search/Advent or Lenten Small Group
- Developing deeper friendships in the parish/having more 'God' conversations
- Attending parish retreats, prayer ministry, adoration, rosary



St Mary of the Cross Catholic Parish

Mordialloc and Aspendale | Bunurong Country

EMBODYING CHRIST'S LOVE TO LOVE GOD, LOVE OTHERS, MAKE DISCIPLES



<https://www.melbcatholic.org/s/mordialloc-aspendale>

St Mary of the Cross Mission Plan October 2025