



TROUBADOUR

Our
Lady

I am the Troubadour (Herald) of the Great King

Parish of St Francis Xavier-St Clare
Greater Box Hill

NEWSLETTER

83rd Edition

September

2026

Radiant with happiness



Sr. Jasmine

On the 23rd July 2026, the Octave of the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Jasmine Balzan entered the Carmelite Monastery of The Child Jesus of Prague and Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Goonellabah, NSW (near Lismore).

It was a bittersweet occasion with her father, godmother and friends present to see her off. Father Dishan, Vocations Director for the Archdiocese of Melbourne, also made the trip to see Jasmine off. After a long discernment and a year in Aspirancy, Jasmine finally crossed the threshold of the monastery, generously answering the call to give her life to God in the service of the Church. Everyone found it difficult to be saying goodbye, but all were happy as well as God's grace was so obviously present.

After she unloaded boxes of books and a few other items which Jasmine was allowed to bring with her, Jasmine left the world. About an hour later there was a short ceremony in the chapel where Jasmine formally asked entry and was accepted into the community.

Then she disappeared from our sight as 'Jasmine' while the Sisters sang *Flos Carmeli* and reappeared a short time later behind the grill in the visitor's parlour as 'Sr. Jasmine' in her new Carmelite clothes, radiant with happiness. The next morning some of the 'farewell committee'

attended Sr. Jasmine's first Mass as a Carmelite before making their way home. *Evelyn Ogilby*

On Friday, 17th July Fr. Phuong invited all parishioners to the Midday Mass to bid farewell to Jasmine. It was a bittersweet occasion, most of us knew we would not have the opportunity to see Jasmine again, but everyone felt nothing but happiness for her. Fr. Ignatius and Fr. James Baptist con-celebrated Mass with Fr. Phuong.

During the prayers, Monica Nevada read a special prayer:- *That the nuns at the Discalced Carmelite Monastery at Goonellabah may be especially blessed as we entrust our fragrant Jasmine to their love and guidance. Let us pray to the Lord.*

At the conclusion of Mass, Jasmine addressed the congregation (See back page for the full transcript) and was anointed and blessed by Fr. Phuong. Parishioners then approached Jasmine to say goodbye and wish her well.



Jasmine and her father



Loving God, we lift up this young woman who answers Your gentle call to enter the Carmelite Order. Fill her heart with deep courage, quiet peace and an enduring joy. May Our Lady of Mount Carmel wrap her in a mantle of grace as she begins her life of prayer.

Around the Parish...

The Columbarium at St. Clare's is a peaceful space where family and friends visit their deceased loved ones. A place where visitors can sit, perhaps pray and remember.

Unfortunately not everyone understands the significance of the area and a month or so ago, stones were taken from the fountain area and plants from the Memorial Wall and the Kelly Columbarium. Fortunately a few hours work replaced the plants and the pebbles.



The photo above shows the fountain basin exposed and the black plastic, which was under stones also exposed.

A very pleasant evening was held at the home of Jonathan and Shyharni Hili. Jonathan runs the RCIA which culminated in his students being accepted into the Catholic faith at the Easter Vigil. Jonathan is not only a very good teacher, but also a marvellous cook and we feasted on numerous Sri Lankan dishes. We finished with cake and Jonathan served the tastiest homemade ice-cream, see below.



On Tuesday, 23rd June a rather giant plinth was delivered and left just inside the front door of St. Clare's Church. Two parishioners attempted to lift and move it, but to no avail. It eventually took 6 men to move it and stand it up just inside the doors to the left.



Early in July a small group of GBH parishioners joined people from surrounding parishes to walk around Tunstall Square accompanied by the Blessed Sacrament.



July was birthday month in the choir and they celebrated with cake after choir practice.





Christmas in July was again celebrated at the Old England Heidelberg Hotel in Heidelberg. Everyone enjoyed the traditional Christmas lunch with all the trimmings followed by of course with Christmas Pudding. Once again our very own *Champagne* Julie was seen enjoying her glass of champagne, above and guests below.



Margaret Kwan, our Parish Music Director and Organist has been assisting a few talented parishioners to increase their skills on the organ. Christine Ong is very enthusiastic and can be seen playing the organ for St. Clare's occasionally at Sunday morning Mass, well done Christine.



A young parishioner admiring the painting of St. Francis Xavier Church, which has been painted by Helen Gigluito for the 100-year celebrations.



The Statue of Our Lady of La Vang was blessed after the 9.00am Mass at St. Clare's on Sunday 26th July by Bishop Thinh. He also con-celebrated the Mass with Fr. Phuong, see below. Bishop Thinh's family donated the statue and the plinth on which it stands.



Bishop Thinh blessing Our Lady of La Vang



Bishop Thinh talking with Msgr Franco Cavarro who celebrates the 11.00am Sunday Italian Mass at St. Clare's Church

Farewell Ron Mackay



Ron Mackay played the organ at both St. Francis Xavier and St. Clare churches for many years until ill health forced an early retirement. He played with passion and love for our churches and great fondness for GBH parishioners. It was with much sadness that we learnt of his passing on the 31st May 2026 after a long illness.



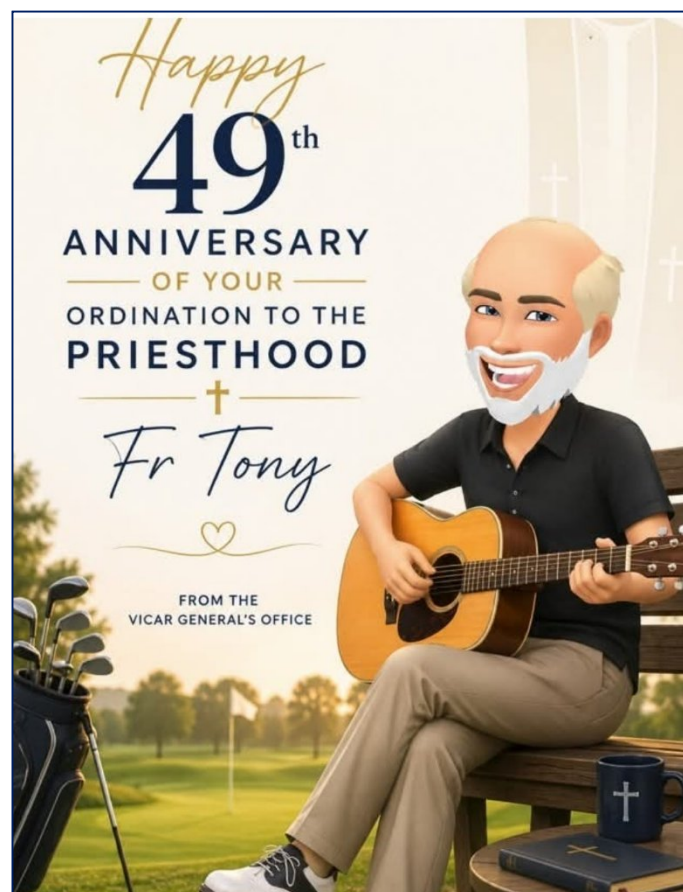
A Memorial Services was held for Ron at St. Francis Xavier Church on the 29th June. Fr Phuong spoke most lovingly of Ron and although he was not a catholic, of his commitment to our churches and later Alice, Ron's wife said a few heartfelt words of love for her husband. Ron's friend Chris Triskilis played the organ and Merryn Hughes was cantor, pictured below. Ron's favourite hymns were played during the Memorial Service.



Heavenly Father, we thank You for the life and ministry of Ron, our dear organist who now plays in Your heavenly choir. Thank You for the decades of music, devotion, and love he poured into our church family. Every note he played lifted our hearts closer to You. We praise You for the beautiful legacy of faith he left behind through his gift of music. May he rest eternally in Your peaceful presence, surrounded by the grandest songs of heaven. Amen.

From Jasmine's heart...

Thankyou everyone so much for coming here especially to worship God and for everyone who also came here to send me off on this journey. I'm not very good with words. What I feel is very hard to express but I, I wanted to thank you all for the immense love I've received while being at this parish. I came here 7 years ago as a very broken person and I found here a true home. A place where I could be comfortable to make mistakes, to be vulnerable and have space to spiritually grow and heal. You have all played a significant role in my spiritual formation and I feel deeply blessed and grateful that God placed me here amongst you all. I also want to thank the priests here, Fr. Phuong and Fr. Ignatius and Fr. James and all the priests that have been at this parish, Fr. Tony and Fr. Marcus and others as well, Fr. Brian for their encouragement and their spiritual nourishment and friendship and just so very, very grateful and my heart is really full of so much love for you all and I'm so excited that I get to take you all in my heart to Carmel where I will be praying for you all there. Please do remember me in your prayers. Thank you and God bless you.



Photographs may be taken during Social Events and /or Masses in GBH. Please advise if you do not want your image to appear in any Parish Publication. E&OE