



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

PARISH VISITATION REPORT

PARTNERED PARISHES

Parishes of Kingsville and Yarraville

13 – 15 February 2026

Parish Priest: Fr. Werner Utri

Parish Secretary: Ms. Emilia Balkin

School Principal: Mr. Matthew Stead
St Augustine's Primary School, Yarraville

Mr. Anthony Hyde
Corpus Christi Primary School, Kingsville

Mrs. Anna Yorston
Annunciation Primary School, Brooklyn

Most Rev. Martin Ashe
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1 April 2026

Parish Communities of Corpus Christi and St Augustine.

Dear Fr. Werner Utri and Parishioners of Corpus Christi and St Augustine's Parishes,

Warm greetings to you all.

I was pleased to be able to visit your Parish recently and spend some time with you and with your Parish Priest, Fr Werner Utri. Over these days, I had the opportunity to visit your three communities and listen to your stories, your connections and involvements within your partnered Parishes. Many of you have lived in your Parish community a long time but in recent times there also has been quite a number of new parishioners and families and it was good to be able to meet with some of them too. There have been people from many cultural and migrant backgrounds that I met. I am grateful for all that was shared with me both individually and within groups and you gave me an appreciation of the overall Parish life within your partnered communities.

FRIDAY 13 FEBRUARY:

10:00am:

ANNUNCIATION PRIMARY SCHOOL, BROOKLYN – MEETING WITH PRINCIPAL AND LEADERSHIP TEAM:

Your Parish Priest, Fr Werner and I visited the Annunciation Primary School and had a meeting with the Principal and Vice Principal. You are a small school with 65 students and have been for many years. You are noticing more new families coming to live in the Brooklyn area and you are hoping that there will be increased enrolments in your school. The Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Engagement and Growth team is providing enrolment support to your school at this time. Because St Mary MacKillop has been associated with your area, you have a special devotion to her and each year the school recognizes a student who best embodies the values of this Saint. There is a real sense of community across the school and being relatively small, it makes that even more advantageous in building up connections with each other. Morning prayer with the students is an important feature of your school life. Over the year, Fr Werner celebrates a good number of masses in the church which is next door to you and there is a good relationship between the school and the Parish. It was good to be able to visit some of the classes and meet with the children.

Following this, Morning tea was held with the members of staff.

Observation:

While small in numbers, you do seek to build up good connections with all your families through various events held throughout the year, building up the good spirit within your community.

Commend:

I commend you for building up that sense of community and a sense of unity across all faiths and for the good of all.

Encourage:

Continue to proclaim Christ and his love as a source of hope and meaning for students and their families.

11.45am**CORPUS CHRISTI PRIMARY SCHOOL, KINGSVILLE – MEETING WITH PRINCIPAL AND LEADERSHIP TEAM:**

In visiting your school, the connection to St Mary MacKillop is very evident. The sisters of St Joseph taught in Corpus Christ for over 57 years until 1999. Her charism is given emphasis throughout the year. Your school is made up of a great diversity of nationalities and cultures. There is a real acknowledgement of family in your school and you maintain that the importance of faith is what makes your school stand out. You have many Vietnamese families whose faith is important to them. Each morning you have a period of prayer with your children. Your school is currently undertaking a capital works program that will result in improved student and staff facilities. You are hoping that your enrolments will improve further as a result of these works. There are many signs of your Catholicity both within and around the grounds of your school.

Observation:

You have put in much effort over the years to create an imaginative space for your children to gather in the grounds of your school.

Commend:

I commend you for the intentional ways over the years that you keep creating up to date welcoming and suitable learning environment with evident symbols and signs of our Catholic faith.

Encourage:

I encourage you to continue to build up a Christ-centered community that all might know and experience the gift and the closeness of his abiding presence for their lives.

12:30pm:**ST AUGUSTINE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, YARRAVILLE – MEETING WITH PRINCIPAL AND LEADERSHIP TEAM:**

In our meeting with the Principal and Leadership Team we experienced a real sense of community within the school and that they make a point of working with everyone being part of the daily life of at St Augustine's school. The Catholic ethos is very much part of your life and you seek to live by Gospel values. The presence of the Josephite Sisters had been part of this school for many years. It is described as a Christ centered and student focused school. The school day begins with all gathering for prayer including parents who are dropping off their children. The patron saints highlighted are Mary MacKillop, St Teresa of Kolkata, St John Paul II and St Augustine. Each Thursday a class Mass is celebrated in St Augustine's Church and you have additional school Masses during the year. Currently, there is discussion on a proposal to establish an Early Years Centre as part of the school, which will enable you to grow more as young families are moving into the area.

Observation:

Your school is very much part of the Yarraville precinct with its church and Presbytery next door.

Commend:

I commend your school at the start of your day for having prayer each morning together with the parents who join with you as well.

Encourage:

Embracing your School motto, may you continue to “Always remain Faithful” in proclaiming Christ as the One who gives hope and meaning to our lives of our children and their families.

ALL THREE SCHOOLS – Observation & Commend:

You all have a very good relationship with the Parish Priest, Fr Werner appreciating his guidance and support. The three Principals in the Parish meet up with Fr Werner to plan the Sacramental program across all three schools with each School assuming responsibility for a Sacrament in a collaborative way. You have Faith formation together for the staff of the three schools which is working well. This year, the topic of staff faith formation was - the importance of the Scriptures in the life of the faith community, which will further enable you in assisting students and their families to grow in their spiritual lives.

Following the school visitations, lunch was held at the presbytery with the three Principals and the Parish Priest. There was conversation around how valuable the Principal Pilgrimages have been in the last few years and especially in providing a deeper sense of Catholic commitment and meaning in the leadership of your schools.

MEETING WITH PARISH OFFICE STAFF:

The secretary works Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9.30am to 2.30pm. She is also responsible for the filling of the Registers. The Parish migrated to Pacem in 2024 and you are also connected to Xero. She follows up on any actions to respond to as a result of the weekend masses. She enjoys her work in the Parish. Another person works on Thursday especially putting the weekly bulletin together and the Rosters for the weekend masses. The Parish Registers were reviewed and are in good order.

PARISH FINANCE AND TRANSITION TEAMS:

The finance team has members from both Parishes. Overall, you have been conscious of how difficult it has been for both the Parishes. At the same time, St Augustine's Parish is now coming into a healthier position with growing income and controlled costs. The main income comes from the rental of the hall, the mobile phone towers and the rooming house. Thanksgiving is also on the increase due to the growing numbers of new people coming into the Parish. It is meeting its loan repayments. The financial position of Corpus Christi is also gradually improving. Up to this point you have been relying heavily on Thanksgiving income, but this year the rental income will begin to improve your financial situation. In 2025, the partnered Parishes increased their donation to the Archbishop's Campaign, nearly doubling their gift from Parishioners.

The Transition team were also at the above meeting. This team was put together recently in response to the ongoing Archdiocesan process of Take the Way of The Gospel Parish Renewal. Both St Augustine's Parish and Corpus Christi Parish have been requested to work more closely with each other by the Archdiocese.

Currently, in order to ensure that your communities are Vibrant, Vital and Viable communities of faith into the future, you are engaging in a process to amalgamate your two Parishes with its three distinct communities into one consolidated Parish. Your Transition team with Parishioners from both Parishes are assisting you with this process at the present time. Support is also been given by the Archdiocese.

Having listened to a number of you and your ideas, you are very positive hoping that you can move forward together into the future. I do hope that through your prayer, listening to each other and sharing with each other, you will embrace a more unified future for the benefit of all. By being united together you will be able to embrace more fully the missionary renewal of your Parishes and be able to proclaim the gospel more effectively within the broader community of Kingsville, Brooklyn and Yarraville. Financially, you will also be able to respond more effectively to the evolving needs of the Parish and its mission. Following the meeting, refreshments were shared with all who were present.

Observation:

You have been working together as Corpus Christi Parish and St Augustine's Parish for quite a number of years with the one Priest as your Parish priest.

Commend: You are going through the various steps that are needed to be addressed in the amalgamation process. I commend you for making time for Parishioners to be able to meet and be able to discuss your future plans together.

Encourage: The process of "Take the Way of the Gospel" is the call to become a more missionary and outward looking community in the proclamation of the Gospel. It is to be disciples of Jesus at the service of those in need around us. The image of the church as a "field hospital" is about being more attentive to who is around us and to respond to the reality of people's lives both spiritually and in other supportive ways. When we merge and unite together, we do so to be even more vibrant in our response to what is happening around us. We are strengthened by being together and placing our gifts at the service of the community of faith and for the world around us. It is also to be able to accompany and invite others who are thirsting for something deeper for their lives and as disciples of Jesus our faith-filled Christian example can become a way to provide new hope for their lives.

SATURDAY 14 FEBRUARY:

The regular 9.30am mass was celebrated at Corpus Christi church and it was also an opportunity to greet people after the mass.

PARISH FORUM – HELD AT CORPUS CHRISTI CHURCH, KINGSVILLE:

At 10.30am, the Parish Forum was held in the foyer at Kingsville. There were a small number of Parishioners present. You shared stories about your faith as a community. You love being involved in the Parish even though you have small numbers.

You are appreciative of Fr Werner, who is very inclusive and trying to organise different initiatives. There is a new vitality emerging within the community.

You appreciate the choirs in the Parish as these help the community to participate more in the mass. Music is highly valued in all the churches. You also thank God for your catholic schools and the liveliness they add to the Parish. They seem to be working even more closely together now. You would like to see more people involved in the Parish. At Sunday Mass, you would like to have more Lectors to proclaim the Word of God.

Who is there to encourage younger people to come to mass especially from the schools? You said that you depend on the Parish Priest a lot to assist in this area.

You are conscious of members of the Vietnamese community contributing in many ways in Corpus Christi church and its liturgy. You have noticed that when the children's choir is there singing, there are more people present. You would love to see picnics/pilgrimages taking place. You would like to see more taking place for the elderly especially around Christmas time. You would also like to see a monthly cuppa on Sundays after the 11am mass.

You feel that there is a better sense of hospitality at St Augustine's in Yarraville. Across the three churches there does appear to be a good number of volunteers but not enough of the younger ones. What about the Liturgy of the Word for children on Sunday? What about more Welcomers at our masses? You are conscious that you are beginning to look at your Parish being united. You have said that there are those who attend the three churches at different times. One of you shared that you already feel that you are part of one big family and that each community has its own unique personality. You appear to have a deep desire to create a more vibrant Catholic community, by being together as one Parish and embracing Take the Way of the Gospel.

In five years', time you would like would like to be united as one Parish community. You are very conscious of the young people that are present with you and who are contributing to the parish especially those who were involved with WYD in 2023. You want them to feel an integral part of the Parish.

Commend:

From the sharing at the Open Forum you are very open and looking forward to the new possibilities for the future of your communities being united.

Encourage:

It may be possible to discuss more how you can involve your young people in Parish life. It might be helpful to make contact with the Archdiocesan Youth Team to speak with them, and even Parishes of Werribee and Hoppers Cross North where they have specific initiatives for the youth.

MEETING WITH VARIOUS MINISTRIES:

At 12 noon a number of people gathered to share their involvement in the different Parish Ministries. Joseph's Corner was established 25 years ago. Sr Jean, a religious and a counselor provided a free service for families affected by drug abuse. This still continues today. Stalls after masses are often present to raise funds. There are volunteers visiting Nursing homes both in Yarraville and Kingsville to bring Holy Communion to the sick and elderly. St Vincent de Paul society with its 8 members are visiting individuals and families with wonderful support from both of the Parishes. You have Music ministry in the Parish of

Kingsville and Carols at Yarraville and you have an Italian prayer group in St Augustine's and Vietnamese Legion of Mary at Kingsville.

Commend: I commend all who are generously sharing their time and gifts for the sake of others and especially for those in need.

Encourage: It would be good to encourage others to come forward to share their gifts to be willing to assist in missionary outreach on behalf of the Parish. This is especially so if the two Parishes are seeking to become one in the near future. For example, it would be good to choose a couple of people who could form a team to organize an Alpha program. There are many young families in your midst who might be attracted to participating in this program.

SAFEGUARDING:

Your Safe-guarding Committee has been working diligently to meet the Victorian Child Safe Standards and is progressively enhancing community awareness of safeguarding matters. The safe-guarding committee submitted a Self-Assessment Tool in September 2025.

Commend:

I commend the efforts of the committee for continuing to build a culture of safety for our young people and vulnerable adults.

Encourage:

I encourage you to continue to address your Safeguarding Essentials Training and your Risk Assessment Profiles. Please know that the Western Region Safe-Guarding Officer is there to assist you in your efforts. Hailey's number is 0467089265

Lunch was followed by Visitation of elderly to anoint and bring Holy Communion to them.

VIGIL MASS AND MEETING WITH PARISHIONERS AT ST AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH, YARRAVILLE:

5pm Vigil Mass.

Being able to gather with you to celebrate the Eucharist is at the heart of our faith and being part of a Community of faith. We find strength in being in the Lord's presence, being in communion with him and we find strength in being together at the Eucharist.

It was also good to meet up with many after the mass and to have a "cuppa" together.

DINNER WITH PARISH PRIEST:

Dinner in the Presbytery.

SUNDAY 15 FEBRUARY:

8:00AM MASS FOLLOWED BY MEETING WITH PARISHIONERS AND MORNING TEA AT ANNUNCIATION CHURCH, BROOKLYN:

Mass at the Annunciation Church in Brooklyn followed by meeting with parishioners and sharing in the morning tea provided by members of the community.

9:30AM MASS FOLLOWED BY MEETING WITH PARISHIONERS AND MORNING TEA AT ST AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH, YARRAVILLE:

Mass at St Augustine's in Yarraville with music and singing followed by meeting with people and a "Cuppa"

11:00AM MASS FOLLOWED BY MEETING WITH PARISHIONERS AND MORNING TEA AT CORPUS CHRISTI CHURCH, KINGSVILLE:

Mass at Corpus Christi and again afterwards sharing in the hospitality of the community. Again, it was good to have music and singing and Lectors sharing in the proclamation of the Word.

11:30AM POLISH MASS AT ST AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH, YARRAVILLE:

It was good to be able to meet with members of the Polish community briefly speaking with them at the mass after communion and later sharing morning tea with the community.

SITE REVIEW:

1:00pm - The Presbytery at Yarraville is now in very good condition in comparison to a year or so ago. The Archdiocese assisted financially, providing a grant for the refurbishment that took place. This has made it more livable and attractive. St. Augustine's church is also in good condition. The Hall is quite large and has been refurbished in recent times. The school and two other groups make regular use of the hall and this brings in additional rental income for the Parish.

The boarding house next to the presbytery also brings in some rental income. Corpus Christi church is in good condition. The former presbytery next door also belongs to the Parish.

This was followed by Lunch with your Parish Priest.

VISIT TO ELDERLY PARISHIONERS – CORPUS CHRISTI PARISH, KINGSVILLE

3:00pm - Visits were made to two elderly Parishioners anointing them and bringing Holy Communion to them

YOUR PARISH PRIEST:

Fr Werner Utri, your Parish Priest has been with you for nearly two years now. From my few days with you and listening to a variety of Parishioners, you are very appreciative of his priestly ministry in your midst encompassing your partnered Parishes. There are those of you who have spoken of his homilies which have been very helpful to you. You appreciate his pastoral gifts. There has also been a lot more involvement of people in the life of the Parish which you are grateful for. The presbytery in Yarraville has been refurbished and is more accessible to Parishioners. Fr Werner has also been involved in the life of your three Parish schools and his relationship with staff and students has been instrumental in bringing Parish and schools closer together. Many have also appreciated his initiative in seeking to bring your partnered Parishes together more formally and the way he is calling on all to be part of the process of addressing the matter at this time.

I would like to thank you all for your warm welcome and hospitality to me in these days of our Parish Visitation. It was wonderful to hear your stories and the ways you live and celebrate your faith. I am grateful too for having met people from a variety of cultural backgrounds. In the midst of your diversity of cultural backgrounds, I have also experienced a great sense of unity in your parishes. It was also good to hear you share your thoughts and ideas about you becoming united in the near future as one overall Parish community.

May the Holy Spirit continue to guide in being true witnesses of Christ's love. May the Peace of Christ come alive in you in the way you live your faith life for others. May you be a true channel of harmony by your words and in your deeds in a world that is fragile and crying out for healing and unity. May people within the broader community experience the joy of the gospel through you.

May the Lord bless you and all your families into the future.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Ashe'.

+Martin Ashe
Auxiliary Bishop of the Western Region

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