



Blessings

The magazine of St Mary of the Cross Parish Mordialloc & Aspendale
Issue no. 29 – December 2023



joy

Welcome to our Christmas '23 issue!



St Mary of the Cross Parish, Mordialloc & Aspendale

St Brigid's Church: 520 Main Street, Mordialloc

St Louis de Montfort's Church & Parish Centre: 37 Dolphin Street, Aspendale

Parish Office: 9580 7981 Email: mordiallocaspendale@cam.org



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

SUNDAY MASS

6pm Saturday Vigil St Louis'
8am Sunday St Brigid's
9.30am Sunday St Louis'
11am Sunday St Brigid's
RECONCILIATION
Friday 12 noon St Brigid's
Saturday 5.30pm St Louis'

WEEKDAY MASS

9.15am Monday St Louis'
(Communion Service)
9.15am Tuesday St Louis'
10am Wednesday St Brigid's
9.15am Thursday St Louis'
11.30am Friday St Brigid's

PARISH STAFF

Parish Priest: Fr Andrew Jekot
Assistant Priest: Fr Ignatius Tan
Parish Leadership Team:
Fr Andrew, Fr Ignatius, Trish Angliss,
Berna Wake
Parish Coordinator: Ann Fitzgerald
Baptism Coordinator: Deb Poynton

HOLY ROSARY AND ADORATION - 1st Saturday of the month 4.30-5.30pm at St Louis' Church

PRAISE AND WORSHIP - 3rd Friday of the month 7.30-8.30pm alternating between our two churches

Join via livestream Catholic Mass with Fr Andrew & Fr Ignatius, 6pm Saturday & 8am Sunday on [YouTube](#)

Stay up to date with us on [Facebook](#), our [Parish Website](#) and by subscribing to our [Digital Bulletin](#)



From the Editor

As I create this issue of Blessings, I reflect on the year we have had. The world has 'learnt' how to navigate pandemics but seems not to have learned how to avoid the atrocities of war. I have often thought lately, if ever there was a time for Jesus to come again, isn't it now? And yet, I feel a palpable presence of the Holy Spirit alive in our parish.

As Fr Andrew says in his column, we are well on our way to becoming a parish that has moved from maintenance (just doing the same old things) to mission (deliberately developing pathways to bring people both inside our parish and outside into a personal relationship with Jesus.). This is intentional and is the working task of the Parish Leadership Team who meet weekly, the Parish Pastoral Council, who have met throughout the year for Saturday morning workshops and our host of serve ministers who step forward to serve God and our parish. It is also the result of every member of our parish who show friendship, love and care for one another.

Wishing you the joy, peace, hope, and love of Christmas,

Berna Wake

Berna.wake@cam.org.au

*Our parish is committed to the safety, wellbeing, and human dignity of children,
young people, and adults.*

Our parish acknowledges that we gather, pray, and live on the land of the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation, and pay our respect to Elders, past, present, and emerging.



What have been the blessings that you have received?



Here we are again celebrating the birth of Jesus and the end of the year. For me the year has gone so quickly having been away on sabbatical and coming back at the “pointy” end of the year. I have many reasons to be grateful and I place these blessings into the crib of my heart this Christmas.

What have been the blessings that you have received this year? What are you most grateful for? Christmas is a time to reflect on how God has been present in your life and the gifts that have come your way. At times, we may struggle to see God's presence, but God is always there, we are the ones that may lose sight of God. For those who are struggling with their relationship with God, can I offer some advice – hang in there, be totally honest with God and tell God your concerns. I am sure that God will respond.

The Prophet Isaiah reminds us in the Christmas readings that *“the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; a light has shone. For a child born for us, a son given to us..., the Prince of Peace.”* Isaiah brought that hope to a people who felt hopeless and dejected, ready to throw in the towel.

God heard these cries and responded with the selfless act of the Incarnation. God coming into the world to be one like us. God cannot get closer to humanity than in this form. Christmas marks that moment in history when God's “touchdown” brought about a light that will never extinguish. Are we ready to embrace this light again?

I would like to thank so many people who have supported me and the parish. To the PLT (Parish Leadership Team) Berna Wake, Trish Angliss, Fr. Ignatius and Kristian Tangso (until September) and to Ann Fitzgerald, our Parish Coordinator along with the many parish volunteers.

To all of you who have opened your hearts to Christ's love and got involved in serve ministries. Without you, our parish would still be in maintenance mode and not the exciting Mission mode that we are on.

Christmas Blessings to you,

Fr. Andrew
Parish Priest
St Mary of the Cross, Mordialloc &
Aspendale

St Francis and the story of the First Nativity scene

Christmas 2023 marks the 800th Anniversary of The Nativity's First Recreation by St. Francis of Assisi



The Vatican's nativity scene in St Peter's Square



The Nativity Scene in St Peter's Square depicts not only Mary & Joseph but St Francis of Assisi

This year marks the 800th anniversary of one of the most enduring and celebrated Christmas traditions, the Nativity.

The Vatican's annual Nativity scene has paid special tribute to St Francis of Assisi who has long been credited with the creation of the first Nativity scene in A.D. 1223.

The Italian mystic and Catholic friar created the first live display of Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus in a cave in the Italian village of Greccio on Christmas Eve in 1223. St Francis was moved to create the display after his pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

At the unveiling of the Vatican's nativity scene this month, Pope Francis said that meditating in front of any Nativity scene should ***"awaken in us the nostalgia for silence and prayer, in our often-so-hectic daily life."***

The pope also said that the Vatican Nativity scene's connection to Greccio should in turn prompt people to think and pray for the inhabitants of the Holy Land amid the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas, especially children and their parents affected by the conflict. ***"These are the ones who pay the real price of war,"*** Pope Francis said.

To watch a short video of the Vatican's Nativity scene 2023, go to:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXRmqou_wYk

By: Berna Wake (with thanks to Marg Deveson for suggesting the story)

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alpha.org.au

**Coming to St Mary of the
Cross April 2024**

Blessing of Pets



Fifteen gorgeous four-legged pooches, great and small, waited patiently with wagging tails for their blessing from Fr Ignatius at our annual Blessing of Pets on the 21st of October on the steps of St Brigid's Church.



Let's Do Christmas Lunch



On Thursday, 30th November, forty parishioners and volunteers gathered in the foyer of St Louis' Church to celebrate Christmas and enjoy a beautiful lunch prepared by members of the Aspendale St Vinnies conference. They were treated to carols performed by the St Louis' School Choir.

Parishioners mingled and enjoyed a delicious lunch consisting of turkey and salad rolls, plum pudding, and mince pies!

Thanks to everyone's generosity we have been able to sponsor 3 children through St Vincent de Paul's Assist a Student Program.

By: Louise Breslin



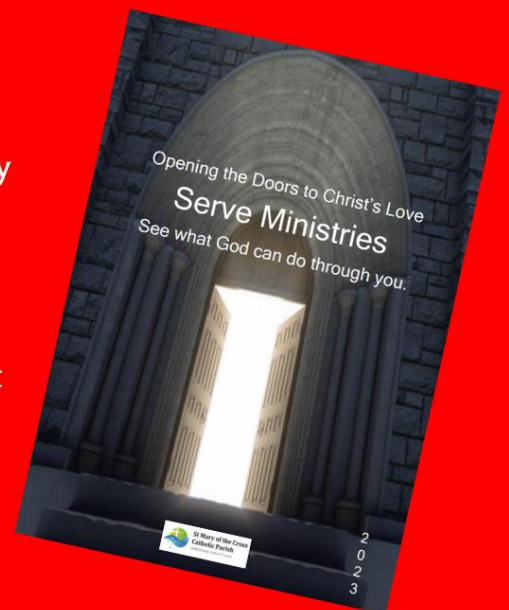
Thank You

*To our
Serve Ministers*

for your dedication in bringing the love of God
to life in people through serving.

Our Inaugural Serve Ministers Thank You lunch in the presbytery
grounds was a great opportunity to gather in appreciation of
all the people that work to make our parish a vibrant faith
community. There are many ways to serve in our community.

See how you can use your gifts to help grow our parish
community by picking up a copy of our Serve Ministries booklet
in the church foyers or
visiting our parish website.



Serve Ministers Lunch



Aged Care Volunteers Lunch



Bringing the love of Christ to others

by Marie Seddon

Our wonderful volunteers are truly living our Parish Mission to Love Others.

2023 has been a much better year for the volunteers to the Nursing Homes, as only a couple of the homes have gone into lockdown due to Covid or respiratory infections. When this happens the residents are deprived of the availability of Eucharist, residents and staff miss contact with the Parish and the good news that volunteers bring, with the weekly Bulletin, Blessings Magazine and bringing their generosity of time, spirit and caring.

Fr Andrew and Fr Ignatius (who are always on call for those in Palliative care), visit our fellow Parishioners in December (Advent) and March (Lent) to anoint residents and to administer special Blessings. Without the volunteers to give the names of residents and help to open their palms to receive the Holy Oils it would not be the celebration that is looked forward to by residents.

At our final meeting and lunch on Wednesday 29th November we had the perfect time to farewell Michael Aylward who has served as a volunteer for several years. Fr Andrew presented him with a Certificate to mark the occasion. Well done, Michael. (photo above)

I would also like to thank Anne and Alison for bringing me into the 21st century. They have reorganized lists of volunteers, residences, and timetables. They have set up What's app connections which enable volunteers and Fr Andrew and Fr Ignatius to connect with everyone. All can communicate about holidays, illnesses, who can fill in, who collects hosts etc.

My home office looks amazing and everything flows better now that the parish office has a finger on the pulse of this Parish community.

Please continue to pray for our volunteers who do such a great job bringing Christ to those who are unable to attend the weekly Masses. Some of the residents watch YouTube and can attend via video. Thankfully they don't know who is behind the camera at St Louis. 😊 (Ed: Thank you Marie)

Significant Anniversaries

We extend the love and friendship of our parish community to all who have been blessed with significant celebrations.



Congratulations Josephine Fogarty 99 years!



Congratulations Margie Campbell 80 years!

Congratulations Norma Taylor 90 years!



Congratulations Maureen Wraight 80 years!



Kathryn & Bob Ryan with a Papal Blessing for their 25th wedding anniversary organised by their son Chester.

World Youth Day 2023

In the October 2023 issue of Blessings, we featured the World Youth Day reflections of Nicky and Marcus Winter. Here, another of our parishioners Emilia Wisniewski, who also attended the pilgrimage in Lisbon shares her thoughts.

“Yes, it’s good to be Catholic...”. These were the words of Archbishop Comensoli during his launch address to this year’s World Youth Day pilgrims on the grounds of St. Patrick’s Cathedral on a chilly August evening in winter last year. If you’re someone my age, you’ve likely spent your life hearing the exact opposite. Usually, it’s from friends or colleagues but sometimes even from family members. To be a young person in the Church today for many is to be alone. You may be the only person at mass your age, the only person you know who goes to mass regularly, or perhaps even for some, the only member of your family who is religious at all. To be a young person who is Catholic, is to contend with the impending reality that most of us will live to see our local parish churches close, and our Catholic community shrink into a precarious voiceless minority.



Candlelight procession at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary Fatima



My pilgrim small group’s flag-bearer getting ready for the Opening Mass in Edward VII Park Lisbon, with millions of other international pilgrims.



Perhaps it is with some providence then that the theme of this year’s World Youth Day was *“Mary arose and went with haste”* (1:39, Luke). Mary, who was only a young child herself, found the conviction to say ‘yes’ to a God she couldn’t see or understand. She was strong enough to break with her society’s expectations to walk out on mission to Judah to her cousin Elizabeth to proclaim the Good News.

And we too were asked to do the same, to journey to the city of Lisbon in Portugal, as missionary disciples, ready to say ‘yes’ to God. For some pilgrims this was a journey of experiencing a Church they’ve never known before, having recently converted or reverted to Catholicism. For some old hands, it was another exciting World Youth Day to add to their collection. And for some it was mum or grandma (or their parish priest) pushing them to go, perhaps unwillingly. But for all, it was an experience that was unforgettable.

When people ask me to describe what World Youth Day is like, words don’t quite do it justice. Practically speaking it’s a series of free masses and catechises packed into a week, held in a host city typically every three to four years. The main drawcard event is a long pilgrimage walk to an overnight vigil sleepout site, attended by the Pope. And waking to an early morning mass on the Sunday. My small pilgrim group travelled to Lisbon with over 500 Melburnians and over 2,000 Australians. But metaphysically speaking, it’s this great journey towards God. Imagine being surrounded by a palpable sense of joy, despite the chaos of life around you. Being able to walk in the literal footsteps of saints like the shepherd children, Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta of Fátima, standing in the very spot Mary was said to appear, or seeing the birthplace of St. Anthony of Padua. Being able to walk with masses of people through the streets of Lisbon, from all corners of the globe, praying the same prayers, and singing the same hymns and partaking in the same sacraments. For those of us young people that are that ‘weird Catholic’ in their social circles in Australia, we could feel comfortable being Catholic with millions of others all over the world.

World Youth Day 2023

The President of Portugal Marcelo Rebelo with our pilgrim group. (Emilia is front left, sharp eyes will spot our Fr Vinh back left. Editor's nephew is middle back.)



Some people ask me what my personal highlight of World Youth Day was. There are far too many to list. But for me it was all the small moments.

The moments of joy, seeing all the volunteers and public excitedly welcoming us into Lisbon in excitement as we streamed in the hundreds into our first Melbourne group mass.

The moments of compassion, watching a group of mixed international pilgrims gather in prayer around a collapsed pilgrim, whilst she was being attended to by medical staff.

The moments of peace, waking up on the cold hard ground at the vigil sleep out and hearing our chaplain Fr. Vinh quietly reading the Bible to my fellow pilgrim group members who were having trouble falling asleep.

The moments of grace, seeing a priest set up a pop-up confessional during the Stations of the Cross, and witnessing a young girl sob through her confession, bearing witness to the power of God's forgiveness.

The moments of awe, seeing the beautiful piety of young French pilgrims kneeling and singing French hymns for hours, venerating the relic of St. Joan of Arc at the Church of Our Lady of Mercy.

The moments of silence, kneeling in adoration of the Blessed Eucharist in complete silence with over 1.5 million other people, including the Pope, at the overnight vigil in Tejo Park, Lisbon.

In his off-the-cuff remarks in his first address to the pilgrims in Lisbon, Pope Francis reminded us that ***"God loves us as we are, not as you want to be, not as society wants you to be, but as you are, with all our defects... He loves us, God loves us, God loves us,"*** as he encouraged us to repeat this statement out loud so we could all let it sink in.

And as we stood amongst millions at the concluding mass, Pope Francis again reminded us of how personal our God is. ***"He knows you; He knows the heart of each one of you, He knows the life of each one of you, He knows the joys, He knows the sadness, the successes, and the failures. He knows your heart. He sees our hearts. And He tells you today here in Lisbon, on this World Youth Day: be not afraid, be not afraid, take heart, be not afraid."***

A simple concept, but one that our young people don't appear to hear well enough in today's world.

To end with some words of encouragement, if you have young people in your lives that lack faith or find faith unconvincing. Firstly, remind them that God loves them. But you yourself, don't be too afraid to press past the discomfort and ask them what is it that sits behind their struggle. Be that person that leads them back to Christ and his Church.

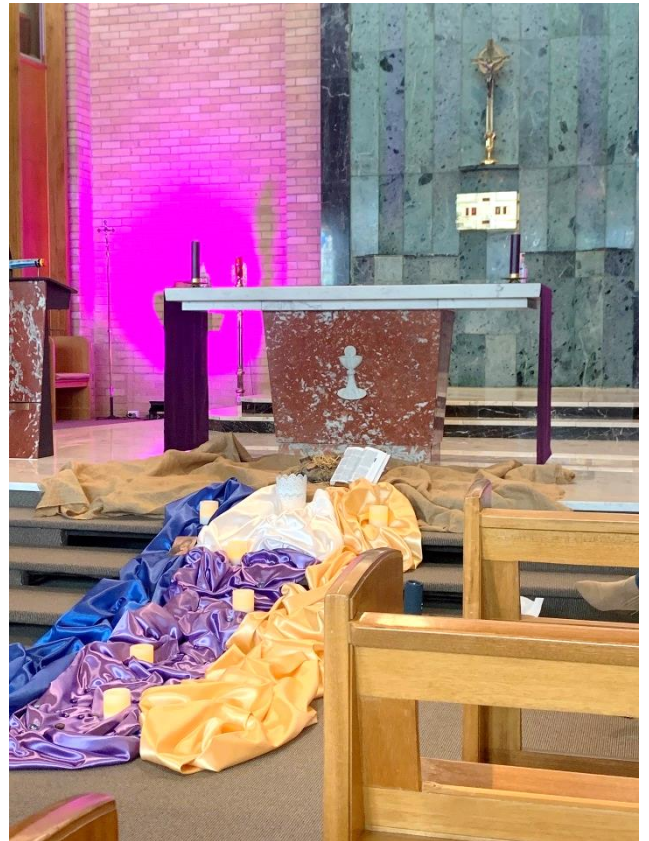
Advent Retreat

In Advent the Church prepares to celebrate the Nativity, when we recall Christ's first coming.

On Saturday the 2nd of December as the rain fell consistently outside, we were glad for the comfort and beautiful sanctuary of our St Brigid's Church.

Jacqui Guiliani from the Melbourne Archdiocese's Proclaim Team led us gently and beautifully in a time of music, scripture reading and silent reflection.

At this often-hectic time in the lead up to Christmas, it was indeed a precious gift we could all share.



Advent Retreat



It was a delight to welcome 'friends of the parish' - Carmel & Jim Noonan



St Vinnies Thanksgiving Mass

On Tuesday, 14th November, members of the Aspendale Conference attended the Thanksgiving Mass at St Francis' Church Melbourne. The mass was for family and friends of the Vincentian family who have died during the past 12 months, along with members, volunteers, staff and donors. The Mass is to honour and celebrate the lives of all who have gone before us.

The names of those deceased were read out as a candle was brought forward for each member, volunteer and donor who has died over the past 12 months. The celebrant was Bishop Anthony Ireland. We were reminded of the beautiful words of Blessed Frederic Ozanam, ***"Yours must be a work of love, of kindness, you must give your time, your talents, yourselves."***

By Louise Breslin



School News!

Jodie Marziano
Deputy Principal
St Brigid's Primary School



What a fabulous year we have had at St Brigid's. This term has been very busy with our school concert- 'Brick to the Future', a Colour Run, Year 3 receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Year 4 camp, St Vincent de Paul appeal and Advent liturgies to name a few. We are now looking forward to the end of year celebrations, especially Graduation. We wish the Parishioners a very safe and happy holiday. May you all experience the gifts of hope, peace, joy and love which Jesus brings.



Fourth term has been a very busy and fun term.

Confirmation

The Year 6 students received the Sacrament of Confirmation early in the term. Bishop Tony Ireland was wonderful with the students and both masses were a wonderful celebration.



School News!

*Carmel Stutterd
Principal
St Louis' Primary School*

Colour Run

The PFA organised a Colour Run for the students and their families. It poured with rain for the whole 2 hours of the event, which made the Colour Run even more fun. We raised \$11,000 and were able to add a gaga pit to the playground for all students to use. Some of the money also went to Christmas on the Streets(COTS) to supported the homeless people in Melbourne's CBD.



School Choir

This term the school choir sang for the St Vincent's Annual Conference lunch and at Aspendale Gardens IGA. They were directed by Tanya Jhoorum and they sounded like angels.

Sports News

The Year 6 girls' AFL team won the premiership for the second year in a row. They played at RESA park and showed great skills and sportsmanship.

Both the Year 6 girls and Boys cricket teams made the regional finals and represented St Louis extremely well.

Big Green Conference

St Louis' hosted the Big Green Conference again this year. Ten schools from the Kingston Council attended the Conference and we won the Golden Chook Award and a \$300 voucher from the Kingston Council.



Art Show

The school had an Art Show this term and it ran over 3 nights. The art works included a large variety of media and showcased many students who have a love for visual arts.

[Link to the Virtual Art Show](#)

*I wish all the parishioners a very
Merry Christmas and look
forward to seeing you in 2024.
Kind regards*

Carmel Stutterd



Friendship Family Day

Our annual Friendship Family Day hosted by our Justice Action Group took place on a beautiful, sunny October day. The grounds of St Louis' school were the perfect venue for our guests, Sr Brigid Arthur and Libby Saunders of the Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project and just under 50 refugee and asylum seeker family members, as well as almost 40 parishioners. Delicious food from Luke and Scott from 'As Simple as That Catering', music and dance from Wilfred, games and activities hosted by Kilbreda students and an incredible white elephant stall made for an extremely pleasant day all round.

Thanks to all, and here's looking forward to next year!



White elephant stall



The St Louis' School chooks were a hit



Our talented and entertaining MC - Niko



Friendship Family Day



Sacrament of Baptism

We welcome & pray for children
recently baptised & their families

Sophia Ann Barker daughter of Joel & Athina
Jake Christopher Mullins son of Tim & Jessica
Charlie Patrick Mullins son of Mark & Renee
William Ross Young son of Stephen & Lauren
Rosie Joy Costa daughter of Daniel & Ashleigh
Aimee Cathlyn Denholm daughter of Jesse & Natalie
Archie Austen Wright son of Matthew & Dana
Jack Henry Willis son of Henry & Alexandra
Phoenix Paige White daughter of Craig & Shennae
Jai Pietro La-Rocca son of Anthony & Adele
Sadie Peta Daizotto daughter of Glenn & Alicia
Bianca Correnti daughter of Simon & Alanna
Romeo Luca Velluto son of Luke & Vanessa
Melissa Taranto daughter of Placido & Janice
Mason John Strickland son of Scott & Meaghan
Lando James Gorman son of Daniel & Catherine

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM



In memoriam

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
~Amen~



Carmel Maria Funston.

Carmel passed away on the 5th of September 2023 at the age of 75 years.

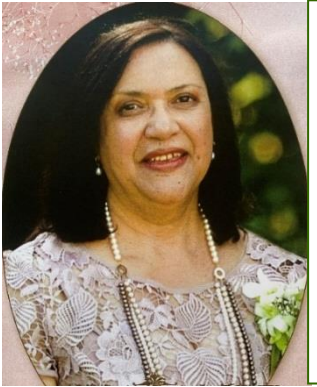
Carmel's funeral was held at St Brigid's Church on the 13th of September 2023.



James Creaney.

James passed away on the 6th of October 2023 at the age of 88 years.

James's funeral was held at St Brigid's Church on the 17th of October 2023.



Ingrid "Judy" Ensil.

Ingrid passed away on the 8th of November 2023 at the age of 75 years.

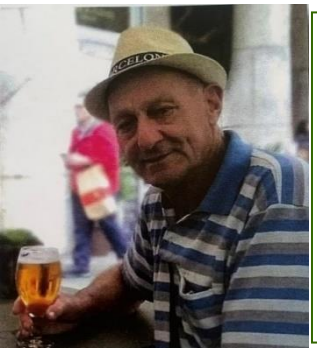
Ingrid's funeral was held at St Louis de Montfort's Church on the 21st of November 2023.



Kathleen Teresa Beattie.

Kathleen passed away on the 18th of October 2023 at the age of 80 years.

Kathleen's funeral was held at Bunurong Memorial Park on the 3rd of November 2023.



Louis van Beveren.

Louis passed away on the 22nd of October 2023 at the age of 75 years.

Louis' funeral was held at St Louis de Montfort's Church on the 3rd of November 2023.



Rita Newton.

Rita passed away on the 3rd of December 2023 at the age of 92 years.

Rita's funeral was held at St Louis de Montfort's Church on the 12th of December 2023.



Suzanne (Sue) Kelly.

Sue passed away on the 14th of November 2023 at the age of 84 years.

Sue's funeral was held at St Louis de Montfort's Church on the 28th of November 2023.

Parish Leadership Team

The Parish Leadership Team have had a busy yet fulfilling year. We took some time out recently to attend a 2-hour art class for our Christmas break up. Can you guess the artist responsible for each piece*?



* The big reveal on the next page

Catechism Class of 2023



Our Catechist classes started as always on the 3rd Tuesday of February. We had six children who made their First Eucharist, six who made their Confirmation and two who made their First Reconciliation.

We started the First Eucharist Program on week two, because the Children were to make their First Eucharist at the beginning of June.

Throughout the 7 weeks of Term 1, our Confirmation, First Eucharist, and Reconciliation children all took part in lessons about Lent and Easter.

We also celebrated St Patrick's Feast Day and St Joseph's Feast Day and finished the first term with the Children taking part in Stations of the Cross.

Term 2 was busy with celebrations of Easter, St Louis de Montfort's Feast Day, The Ascension, Pentecost, The Trinity, and, during May, learning about Our Lady.

On the 11th of June six of our children made their First Eucharist at a beautiful Mass, celebrated by Fr Andrew, for the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Term three saw us starting our Confirmation and Reconciliation Programs. We celebrated the Feasts of the Transfiguration, Mary Mackillop, and the Assumption of Our Lady.

At the beginning of Term four we celebrated Confirmation and Reconciliation.

The two Confirmation Masses, which took place at St Brigid's on the 12th of October, were beautiful and memorable occasions for our six children, three at each of the Masses, joining with Confirmation classes from St Louis' School.

It has been a pleasure to be part of the Catechist Program this year and the children have all been wonderful.

Although our numbers were quite small this year, we are looking forward to next year, hopefully with larger numbers of children. We would love to have classes for younger children in Prep, Grade 1, and Grade 2 if there are any children who would like to join us.

Next year's Catechist classes for First Eucharist, Confirmation, and First Reconciliation, will begin on Tuesday the 20th of February 4pm – 5pm.

Elizabeth, Carmel, Jenny, and Gayle.



Hmmm...should we stick to our day jobs?



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Christmas Blessings

A safe, happy & blessed Christmas to all



**St Mary of the Cross
Catholic Parish**

EMBODYING CHRIST'S LOVE