

ST MICHAEL'S IN 2017

We've had a busy time in 2017. We started our year off by farewelling first Fr Prasanna, and then Fr Bernard. It was sad to see them both go, we've been blessed with their contributions to our Parish life. Their leaving also meant we got to welcome Fr Saji and then Fr Francis. We are grateful to have these two gentlemen who have travelled half way round the world to live amongst us and celebrate our faith with us. Their generosity of spirit and obedience to their God are examples to us all. We thank them and their families for their great generosity.

Our stalwart Monsignor, 'Mons Allman' has kept on going throughout the year, bringing his own spirit and wisdom to many aspects of Parish life. Mons has continued to say Mass each Sunday morning at Glengarry, and enjoyed the bishop's presence at a special Mass at St Columbkille's in September. Mons has also celebrated our Saturday morning Mass each week and he celebrates Mass at O'Mara House also. How richly blessed is St Michael's to have his indomitable presence amongst us.

We've had a lot to celebrate this year ~ we've helped 67 students receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time; 52 students who celebrated their First Holy Communion and 68 students who had Bishop Pat confer Confirmation on them. We welcomed three adults into our Parish at the Easter Vigil.

Our Family Groups celebrated their 30th Anniversary in March; we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the appearance of Our Lady of Fatima; our Diocese celebrated 130 Years, our St Vincent de Paul Conference celebrated 80 years of service; our Charismatic Prayer Group celebrated turning 40; the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement celebrated its Jubilee, we hosted the Jubilee Cross here for four nights; we shared in the remembrance of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation of the Church; we helped Hiep Nguyen and Avinash George celebrate their ordination as Deacons; we joined celebrations for the World Day of Prayer.

And we've celebrated with Evening Prayer services in both Lent and Advent, with moving liturgies for our dead, and for children gone too soon. We've celebrated baptisms, weddings and funerals. Our young people are developing 'their Masses', full of joy and energy! We've celebrated Mass in nursing homes in the town and at St Gabriel's Primary School.

We've cast our vote in the 'same gender marriage' debate and in the Assisted Suicide debate. We've listened and learned from evenings with Dr Rosemarie Prosser, our men have organized a Men's Breakfast Group, we've continued to provide a healthy meal each Thursday to those who need it, we've visited those in hospital and those who are housebound, and along with all this, we have our Piety Stall, our Children's Liturgy, our Maintenance Team, our Parish Pastoral Council, our conference of St Vincent de Paul, our RCIA Team our Liturgy Team our Youth Group, our Cells

Groups, our Family Groups, our Finance Team, our Lectors and Commentators, our Knights of the Southern Cross, Baptism Preparation Team, Cells Prayer Groups, sacristans, welcomers, Working Bee attendees, money collectors, money counters, flower arrangers, church cleaners, all who help in any way.

The list of our many talents and the many groups we meet in seems to be endless, and I make apology to any group I've left out – due to lack of time, not lack of appreciation for the many, many wonderful and varied ways we each find to be St Michael's Parish, Traralgon. Each one of us is a valued member of our parish, and every contribution is what goes towards making us our very unique parish.

And now, as the year is drawing to its close, we say another farewell, to Mark Hughes. Thanks for your energy, your great support. You'll be sorely missed, Mark. Where to get a cuppa now???

During the year we also farewelled Cathy Blackford as Principal of St Michael's Primary School; she is very busy now preparing the new Catholic Primary School in Cowes, ready to open in 2018. With best wishes Cathy for an exciting and fulfilling start to Our Lady Star of the Sea, Cowes. We said thanks to Susan Grout who resigned as Chairperson of the Parish Council, to Brendan & Annette O'Hara for twenty years of Parish Baptism Team leadership and to Brian Doyle who resigned as President of the Traralgon St Vincent de Paul Society. What sterling efforts!

Our thanks to Fr Francis, Fr Saji and Fr Bernard and Fr Prasanna for all they have brought to our Parish and to Sr Doreen whose unique gifts are so greatly enjoyed.

It is with great thankfulness all these events can be recorded here, our God is good to us, indeed.

May God's abundant love and peace find ample room in all our hearts this Christmas time, may we remember with awe that God loves us so much he sent us the baby Jesus, his only Son, to bring us to eternal life.



Wishing all our parishioners
and all those you love,
a holy, safe and
peace filled Christmas time.
With best wishes from
Fr Francis, Fr Saji
and Sr Doreen

Entrance Antiphon Cf. Ex 16:6-7

Let us all rejoice in the Lord, for our Saviour has been born in the world. Today true peace has come down to us from heaven.

First Reading Isaiah 9:1-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

A son is given to us.

The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone. You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase; they rejoice in your presence as men rejoice at harvest time, as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.

For the yoke that was weighing on him, the bar across his shoulders, the rod of his oppressor, these you break as on the day of Midian. For all the footgear of battle, every cloak rolled in blood, is burnt and consumed by fire.

For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him: Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace. Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end, for the throne of David and for his royal power, which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity.

From this time onwards and for ever, the jealous love of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 95:1-3. 11-13 R. Lk 2:11

(R.) *Today is born our Saviour,
Christ the Lord.*

1. O sing a new song to the Lord,
sing to the Lord all the earth.
O sing to the Lord, bless his name. **(R.)**
2. Proclaim his help day by day,
tell among the nations his glory
and his wonders among all the peoples. **(R.)**
3. Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad,
let the sea and all within it thunder praise,
let the land and all it bears rejoice,
all the trees of the wood shout for joy
at the presence of the Lord for he comes,
he comes to rule the earth. **(R.)**
4. With justice he will rule the world,
he will judge the peoples with his truth. **(R.)**

**Second Reading** Timothy 2:11-14

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Titus
God's grace has been revealed to all people.

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

*Good News and great joy to all the world:
today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.
Alleluia!*

Gospel Lk 21:1-14

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke
Today a saviour has been born for you.

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn. In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven
and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

