

## ST MICHAEL'S IN 2018

2018 has been a busy, vibrant year in our Parish.

We farewelled Fr Saji in February and wished him well in his new parish in Narre Warren. It felt very quiet in the office when he departed.

We welcomed Jodie Ware as the Principal of St Michael's Primary School, we're so glad she's here amongst us, helping the school to flourish.

At the end of April, we welcomed Deacon Tony Aspinall to our Parish. He has been a great support for Francis in the Parish, helping out in myriad ways. His good humour, and quiet presence is greatly appreciated.

In 2018 we celebrated the Year of Youth, and it's been fantastic to see the youth of our Parish responding in commitment, generosity, joy and faith.

Children's Liturgy of the Word has continued to flourish, a great experience for young families and their children to have this special time to learn about the gospels and their faith.

Our SM@YL Youth group had a full year with many fundraising activities and great success in sending off 80 shoe boxes to Operation Christmas Shoebox, and in collecting toys for the local Toy Run.

We now have a Youth Council ~ Tanya Wandue, Jim Townsend, Sarah Rickwood, Ella Hill and Josh Hanratty: the Council met weekly to celebrate their faith, to have fun and to help organize our Youth Masses, running the training sessions. And the Parish was richly blessed to enjoy ten Youth Masses during the year. It's an awesome experience to celebrate Mass with them, as they continue to grow in faith and confidence in themselves and their parish community.

In September our Youth Ministry Team ran a Celebrate Youth of the Valley event at Lavalla College – it was a great experience, so much talent in our Valley, a great Mass too. Great fun, great food. Great to see parishioners supporting our youth.

Josh, Sarah & Tanya were accompanied to the Ignite Conference in Brisbane in early October. Three Secondary School Youth nights were held throughout the year, with good attendances and lots of fun and learning happening. It's great to see our 'less junior youth' gathering, growing in confidence and faith.

We look forward to a year of great formation for all our Youth in 2019.

We had 69 children who celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time; 67 children who celebrated First Holy Communion and 59 children who celebrated Confirmation with Bishop Pat in May.

We welcomed Bishop Michael Apochi, Bishop of Otukpo in Nigeria, he is Fr Francis' Nigerian Bishop. We had a wonderful Mass with Bishop Michael, Fr Solomon, Fr Edwin and Fr Francis, led by our Youth Team.

We baptised nine school aged children, and brought eight people into the Church at Easter, and have had two other adults join our community during the year.

In April we had a parish open meeting with Bishop Pat in preparation for finding our responses for the Plenary Council in 2020. Mike Hansen and the Plenary Council Team have worked diligently to gather our thoughts and to compose them into a comprehensive document which has gone to the Diocese and to the Plenary Committee.

We enjoyed each others company, some dancing and some trivia at our Parish Dinner at Dal Mondo's. A great way of building the Body of Christ. We gave thanks to people who have retired from various ministries – Margaret Wilkinson (Baptism Team), Peter Mitchell (Maintenance Team) and Sheila Edgar (Liturgy Team).

Knights of the Southern Cross are still meeting every month, their support of our parish and our schools is a great gift. In August, Bob Drenen was recognised for 50 years membership of the Knights. Dedication indeed!

We celebrated the 25th anniversary of Fr Cagney's death with a Mass, morning tea and the planting of an Aoteora memorial rose (not very Irish, but bred by an Irishman who lived in New Zealand).

We've had wonderful support for our website from Steve Kimani and Kevin Taylor. Please check it out, it's fabulous, [www.smpt.org.au](http://www.smpt.org.au).

Mons Allman has continued to give witness to his faith throughout 2018, celebrating Masses at O'Mara House, Glengarry, and on Saturday mornings and celebrating Reconciliation.

Whilst his age may slow him down a little, his resolute spirit is a great example of faith for each of us. Thank you Mons, from us all.

We've had much to give thanks for this year - our wonderful Pentecost Mass and 'red' gathering; our three Men's Breakfasts with great guest speakers; two memorable Masses with the Lavalla Liturgical Choir; the 'Be Moved by the Spirit' Seminar held by the Charismatic Prayer Group; our Year of Youth Art Competition; the Parish Leaders Retreat in Rosedale; celebrating the Feast days of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and St Michael with wonderful liturgies and gatherings afterwards; celebrating Mary our Mother; Healing Masses; the Traralgon branch of the Catholic Women's League has re-opened; so many wonderful gatherings of our Parish family.

Building the Body of Christ, a series of four adult formation evenings was held in October and November. These sessions discussed who and what is the Body of Christ, about our need to be building a spiritual house, caring for each other and helping our community to grow in God's love.

We recognised that Jesus' great concern is for the people of God, for each one of us, and that our belonging to the church brings with it a co-responsibility in building the Body of Christ. It is the responsibility of each of us to reach out to each other, to care for each other, to value the other and to work together towards building a community where the love for God and each other is drawn from the love of Christ in the Spirit.

*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, Deacon Tony  
and Sr Doreen.*

**Entrance Antiphon** Phil 4:4-5

*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** Is 12:2-6 Rv6

**(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** Titus

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** Luke 2:10-11

*Alleluia, alleluia!*

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

**Gospel** Luke 2:1-14

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

*Today a saviour has been 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.'*