

2023 Baldivis Catholic Parish

Annual Report

The last year has proved to be another very busy year for our Parish.

The major change we encountered was the departure of Fr Arulraj following his appointment as Parish Priest of the Guildford Parish. We held a farewell and acknowledged the valued contribution Fr Arulraj had made during an important transition period and one which continued to be impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic.

It was with great expectation that we welcomed Fr Alexis Vega - our new, young and enthusiastic priest. One of the two major events for the year was the Installation Mass for Fr Alexis, presided over by Bishop Don Sproxtton and followed by a Community Celebration.

In line with our Parish Plan, we held a second major event with our celebration of Saint Mother Teresa's Feast Day in September, in the form of a multicultural Mass followed by a shared luncheon. I acknowledge the support of Parishioners in embracing the spirit of these events and providing a large range of multicultural cuisine.

A particular focus of the past year was to concentrate on the spiritual enrichment of our Parish and this was facilitated by the offering of two specific Adult Faith Formation opportunities. Last November, Matthew Ogilvie presented a number of weekly evening sessions on the Sacraments and this September, Dr Marco Ceccarelli presented 3 evening sessions on "The Mission of the Church in the Modern World of Vatican II". We learned of our call to be salt, light and leaven to others. Thank you to those who participated and contributed to these sessions.

The last 12 months have seen our normal schedule of Sacraments undertaken and memorable Easter and Christmas celebrations. Each Friday of Lent saw Stations of the Cross held in the early evenings- these were extremely well attended.

During the year we saw a change to the timing of the Youth Mass moving to the 5pm timeslot on the third Sunday of the month. A children's choir has also been introduced and has provided a joyful enhancement to several Masses. Recently, an earlier 8am Mass was introduced on Thursday mornings, to better accommodate College staff and community members.

2023 saw the World Youth Day held in Portugal and as a Parish we were delighted to see 12 young people represent us at this global event after the significant fundraising they had undertaken. On their return, it was encouraging to hear of the positive impact this iconic gathering had made on them.

As part of our endeavours to be a welcoming Parish, our greeters who welcome you at the door when you come to Mass and our wonderful hospitality volunteers who prepare morning teas and other catering, continue to play an important role. We also trialed "Say G'Day in May" to encourage parishioners to introduce themselves to people they didn't know. This initiative is something we are keen to build on in future years.

Our Parish has continued to be an active participant of the Hub of Parishes which along with Baldivis, includes the Kwinana, Rockingham and Port Kennedy Parishes. This is a forum to share ideas and coordinate events across our area.

In terms of outreach, the generosity of our Parish was again to the fore last Christmas with the donation of Christmas gifts for the children of needy families. Thank you to the organisers of this valuable initiative.

It is worthy to note that Mother Teresa Catholic College celebrated its 10th anniversary this year. The College is an important part of our community and the strong relationship we have with the College is never more apparent than in the contribution of the College Staff who undertake the cleaning of the Church during the 40 weeks of school terms. This is an outstanding contribution which I acknowledge and sincerely thank them for.

With Fr Alexis' arrival, a re-allocation of space at the Presbytery has seen the Parish Office move to the northern side of the building, with the main house now the dedicated Presbytery.

As reported last year, a lump sum payment was made against the Church loan which has proved a positive move in reducing our interest payments in this year of significant interest rate increases. The outstanding principal on our loan currently stands at \$375,984. The past year has seen our expenses increase as we deal with the operations and maintenance of the Parish in an environment of high inflation. We have also seen a slight decrease in income received. As a result, our net position was down on the previous year. I acknowledge the contribution of Chairman, Bryan Evans, and the Finance Committee for their continuing stewardship.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the retirement from the Parish Council of Kevin Poppen after his maximum 6 years on the Council. Thank you, Kevin, for your contribution. We look forward to your continued support with our social media and the Music Ministry for which your skills are greatly valued.

Thank you to Fr Alexis and all the Parish Councillors for their ongoing work, particularly Catherine Conway, our ever-reliable Secretary, who works tirelessly.

It would be remiss not to mention the contribution of our Parish office workers, Gigi and Helen for their support of Fr Alexis and the Parish, along with the numerous volunteers without whom the Parish could not operate. A sincere thanks to all our wonderful volunteers for their continuing dedication and commitment. We are blessed to have many hard-working helpers who are the heart of the Parish. Of course, we are always in need of additional help and whether it is to read, be a sacristan, a safeguarding officer, an acolyte or server, a cleaner, helping out with maintenance, hospitality, writing the Prayers of the Faithful, preparing the rosters, providing assistance with Children's Liturgy or the Sacramental programmes, or being a flower arranger, a collector or part of the Legion of Mary or other groups, more hands are always welcomed. Please consider how you might be able to share your talents.

In line with our Parish Plan we will be looking to establish a Social Committee to help co-ordinate events in the Parish and so we intend calling for volunteers to join this group.

Finally, I wish to thank all Parishioners for their continued support of the Baldivis Parish and Father Alexis for his energy and guidance over the last year.

Michael Parker,

Chair, Parish Pastoral Council