



'HEARTBEAT'



Around the Parish

Sacred Heart Parish Moruya & Districts.

A Ministry of the Caring Groups

0431 354 993

0497 315 534

June, 2021.

Welcome to this edition of "Heartbeat", our first for 2021. The newsletter was last published in September 2020. Much has happened since then and for the most part all affected by COVID-19 restrictions.

Preparations for this edition commenced before Easter. Included in this issue are up dates from the PPC, Finance Committee and Caring Groups. We also put a 'Spotlight' on the Parish Office and 'Feature' an interview with Fr George.

For a while we were not allowed to attend Mass, when we were, we were not to hand out paper Bulletins, hand sanitizing and registering personal details and many other restrictions have been imposed for our safety.

Today, while still living with Covid restrictions we are coping better and thanks to everyone sticking to the protocols, our towns and our churches have been safe from transmission.

The numbers at Mass are growing, beautiful signs of life appearing in the requests for baptisms and weddings. Our PPC and Finance Committees are ministering diligently in our parish under the guidance of Fr George Azhakath.



New ministry groups have been created. We now have a 'Hospitality' group who will look at providing the 'cuppa' or what is necessary for our socials.

Fr George has also instigated a Liturgy Committee. This ministry covers a wide range of activities concerning liturgies. Our Holy Week liturgies a good example.

There are many things needing to be planned and co-ordinated for the smooth running of these liturgies. Readings, music, musicians, processions, setting up, putting away, lighting, flowers etc. Nothing happens by itself

We thank all who helped to make our Easter liturgies so special. Included in that is the office staff who managed to produce a large volume of printing under some technical difficulties.

A very special 'Thank You' to Fr George who with his

love and praise of God so evident, provided us with the guidance to enter into the special time of Easter.

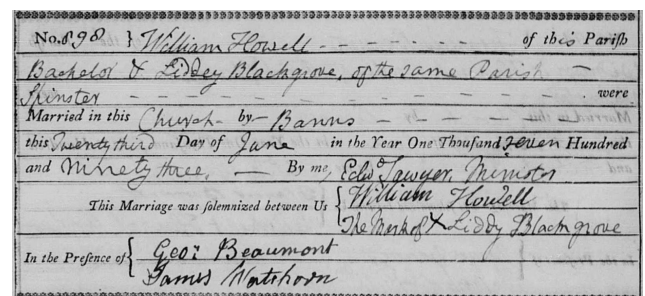
It was very heartening to see the increased numbers attending of both locals and visitors.

Recently we have held Confirmations and celebrated our feast day of the Sacred Heart.

SPOTLIGHT ON: 'The Parish Office'.

Mrs Vickie Moore is our new parish secretary. As the departing secretary I thought it important to put a 'spotlight' on the position in this issue.

The secretary's position once was a very minor part of the parish, although important. Priests used to write up the Registers for birth, deaths, marriages and confirmations. A pre-printed form to complete and sign for bap-



tisms etc were provided by the Australian Church Administration and a Bulletin or Pew Sheet was typed on an Olivetti typewriter with a black and red inked ribbon and maybe duplicated



off on a spirit or Gestetner machine on Folio or Foolscap sized paper. Money was banked sometimes by the priest, mostly though a few parishioners helped.

Today all those activities still need doing but by more modern means. All Register entries

have to be entered into the computer as well as the book. Today the Government has brought in policies that all churches have to comply with. **Copyright:** A yearly subscription for a Licence is made and we need to report every hymn we use so the composers can be paid.

Working With Children (WWC) This is very closely watched for the safety of children. Any volunteer who might come into contact with a child needs to have a WWC. Once it is received by the Office, it is sent to the Archdiocesan office for verification, then noted and filed. Along with this EVERY volunteer in the parish needs to be given a copy of the **Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children**, they need to read it and sign and return the form provided to say that they have read it. This returned form also needs to be recorded and filed. All files of course kept up to date.

Then we have **Workers Health & Safety**. There is a whole manual on policies, procedures, forms to be completed at certain times and forwarded. Safety issues like the exit signs in the church, uneven footpaths, fire hazards. There are policies for home groups and forms to be completed. So it goes on.

All of these are now entered into a big Data Base that is only available to parishes in our Archdiocese and is a secured site. All the entries from the Registers go into the computer as well. The hand written registers are the legal entries. All the information about planned giving contributors, WWC, CC, and many more are recorded in this data base.

We have not looked at payments of accounts. The typing of Bulletins and printing. EMAILS that come regularly like dawn, phone calls and personal visits. We won't mention baptisms, weddings and booklets for various liturgies. The secretary's role has changed. For the most part, the secretary works on their own processing the normal flow of work needing to be done and the priest verifies accounts to be paid and advises the secretary about current and forthcoming matters needing attention. Privacy matters and the recording of personal information are stricter now than before.

The secretary also needs to see to the mail, to the Web page, keep an eye on office supplies and keys and a lot of other issues that arise from time to time. Two of the latest is the extra security cameras and the Tap & Go machine.

It has been reported in previous publications that a number of parishioners have volunteered to help with WWC., Code of Conduct, WHS and Copyright. This is a great help to the secretary who still has to enter and follow up with the information gathered

by the volunteers in each of these areas. No less appreciated are those who produce Rosters for Readers, Flower Arrangers and Special Ministers of Communion.

There is ALWAYS something needing to be done in the parish office. Over the past two years we have had continual trouble with all machinery in the Office. Phones out, photocopier not working the computer not working because of the Internet being down. We continue to have trouble with the telephone but I am happy to announce that we have a new photocopier.

Vickie is very keen to learn and needs the support and understanding of the parish especially when technology fails her.

CARING GROUPS—MORUYA & TUROSS HEAD.

While both groups have experience a quieter time due to Covid, both groups have still been called upon to help with transport, one woman recently widowed called upon us because there was some maintenance needing doing and she didn't know if she needed to engage a tradesperson or if a handyman would be able to help. One of our male volunteers went around to assess the situation and was able to advise her. We helped in some areas and referred her on for the rest. She was and still is very happy. Another call recently was for help to put the garbage bins out as the person who usually helps was away. The elderly person lives on a steep hill and is unable to handle the bin on the steep slope.

Currently we are organising the boxing of books from a members' garage. There is evidence that not one single book has been passed on over many years.

We are also supporting a young hairdresser who is volunteering to cut hair for those in difficult circumstances by asking for donations of female toiletries to be given out. This request has been in our weekly Bulletin. Any donation of soap, shampoo, comb/brush, personal hygiene etc will be gratefully received.

In Tuross, the Social Thursday mornings continue to be very popular. Because friendships have grown, members have more friends to talk to and be remembered by. It is a great 'pick me up' when a friend calls or sends a card to let you know you are being thought of.

The Moruya group also meet every Friday at the Vulcan Café at 11am. These meetings are just for socialising. Always a good laugh is had and anyone can join these mornings—no joining fee or

commitment.

On Easter Monday the Tuross group was shouted a stall at the local Village Fair. The Tuross Men's Shed donate this space each time allowing us to let locals know of our availability. We also advertise the Moruya group.

Our Moruya group is pleased to have one of our original volunteers return back to live in Moruya.

Thanks to the generosity of parishioners there is now a decent fridge/freezer in the Kennedy Meeting Room and we are now asking for donations of meals, soups, slices of cake to freeze and offer as a gesture of caring to those feeling down in health or spirits. Empty containers are available.



Knitters have been busy making squares that have been made into rugs and given to Vinnies. Donations of wool are always needed.

Bert's Watercolour Art class continues on a Tuesday morning in the Kennedy Meeting Room and is open

to all to attend. People share their hobbies as well. It is a very friendly and creative group who love to share and learn from one another. Socialising is the most important activity of the caring groups. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend the morning 'cuppa' either at the Tuross Club on Thursdays 10am or at the Vulcan Café on Fridays 11am. Transport can be arranged if needed.

REMINDERS:

House fire alarms are needed to have the batteries checked or whole units installed. The local Fire Brigade will assist residents with this or you can phone the Caring Group for advice.



Government subsidies are available to pensioners for travelling. A voucher for \$250.00 is available. If you need help with applying for this then contact us and we will assist you.

The combined Caring Groups and PPC are holding a discussion on LONELINESS on Sunday 18th July, 2-4pm in the St Mary's School Hall. All Denominations and Agencies in Moruya are invited to attend to look at the issues, activities/support available and to work together on any major area of need in our community. Everyone is invited to contribute on this wide ranging topic. Residents are needed to attend so we can hear your issues.

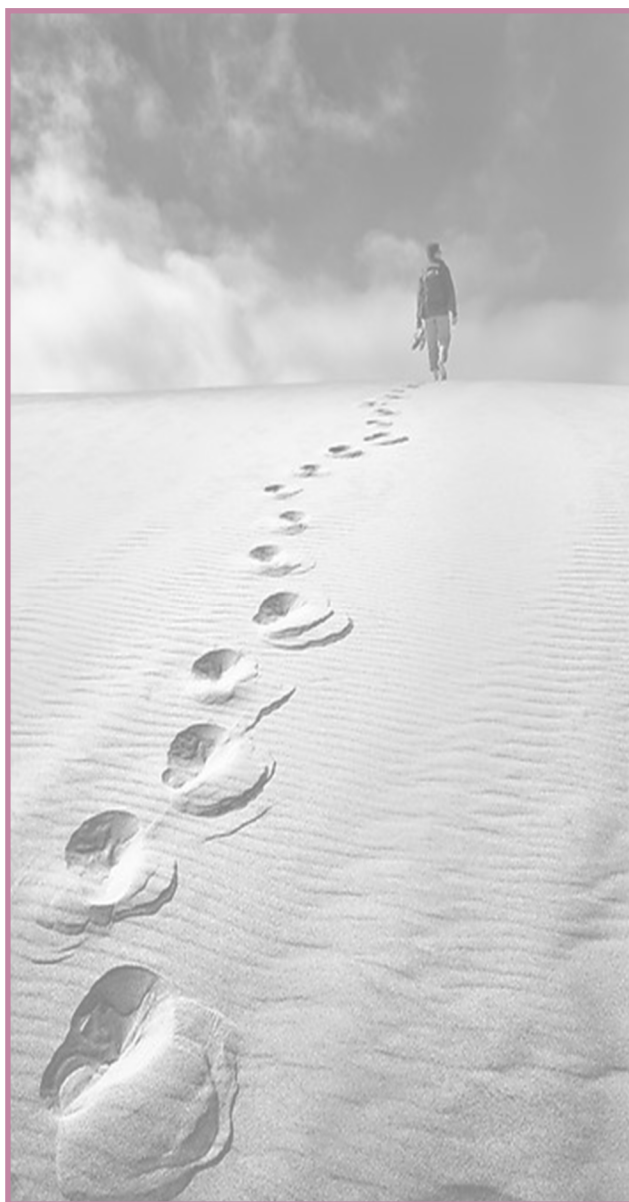
In 2019 Fr Steve Astill convened a Forum of Catholic Agencies in Moruya to look at the needs of the community. Three issues arose and one was LONELINESS. Finally we are able to address this subject, which is so diverse. We can be lonely because of distance or isolation, even feel lonely in a crowd.

The caring groups will be looking at ways to address the problems that arise. Agencies and other denominations will advise of their programs and funding and our caring groups perhaps could look at home visits, phone calls or sending a letter.

This newsletter is also a work of the Caring Group. If you would like to be involved in the group or have a need, please phone us. We do not charge money. We are neighbours helping neighbours. Contact to Kath Harris or Pat Anderson.

Moruya: 0431 354 993.

Tuross: 0497 315 534



Interview with Fr. George.

By Sue McCosker. PPC Chair.

1. *Father, you have been in the Parish now for 18 months. What has been your experience coming to a rural Parish? Most enjoyable? Hardest?*

It is not easy to talk about oneself in an interview but I will give it a go. My Missionary Journey in this Archdiocese began when Archbishop Christopher Prowse asked me on 9th December 2019 to go to Sacred Heart Parish, Moruya as early as the very next day. I was warned, but ‘not in a dream’ to take a different route, travelling a long way from Canberra through unfamiliar places via Cooma and Bega to reach Moruya, as the Kings Highway was closed due to Bush Fires in the Clyde Mountains.

I started off within 24 hours, with a sense of urgency. I reached Moruya at 4pm on Tuesday 10th December 2019, to be greeted by Mrs. Pat Anderson in the Office and to get ready for Mass at 5.30pm. You can imagine my predicament as I walked into the office and presbytery in an unknown land with nothing to start with as there was no handing over of the office as I took charge. I had to find my own way.

The rest of the week was challenging to conduct a big Aboriginal Funeral about 220 attending, in a day or two as well as officiating at St. Mary’s Year 6 School Graduation Mass and ceremonies.

I was also unaware that within three weeks I would have a ‘Baptism by Fire’ to be baptized with.

You ask me, ‘was it most enjoyable or Hardest?’, well, I am enjoying my time here but at the same time ‘it was the hardest time ever’.

Coming to a parish two weeks before Christmas, facing bushfires as never before with its immediate negative effects in persons and in society; followed by COVID 19 lockdown; church closures; daily personal anxieties and trauma, all these were surely highs more than anyone could manage especially one from overseas who is in a local leadership position.

It was hard but I stood the ground. Soon the community, the church building, the premises and the presbytery received an extreme facelift and steady growth to which you have all witnessed.

Commenting on ‘coming to a rural parish’ I can say: I have no problem living in a City or town or village. Of course I miss a lot of my Australian and Indian family friends in the City but as in the past “I am fully in where I am’ until I am sent to another place. ‘Bloom where you are planted’ is a motto I follow inspired by the Patron of my Order, St Francis De Sales.

2. *Can you tell us about your childhood—where you come from and what type of region is it—farming, urban, industrial; family—siblings. Are they all*

still at home; schooling— what did you most enjoy as a child.

I was born on 24th March 1960 in Kerala, a small southern state in India. I am the 4th boy child of my parents Varghese and Theresa Azhakath. We are eight children; 7 boys in a row and the eighth and the last, a girl (Delphina)

My Father, after retiring as a Coach Driver under the British Regime in India took up agriculture. We had 10 acres of land and the entire family worked on it cultivating rice, fruits and vegetables.

One of my brothers retired from working in the Indian Institute of technology, another is working as a military Engineer, and the others are with small local businesses and agriculture.

My sister Delphina is a nurse in Scotland, settled there in Glasgow for 13 years with her husband and two adolescent girls.

My parents died many years ago. My brothers are all well settled with their families living in Kerala. The Ancestors of my parents were all Catholics and practised their faith as their first priority in life.

Kerala State is an evergreen, agricultural, most beautiful region in India. It is acclaimed as one among the 50 must see places in the World. History bears witness to Kerala as the State which accepted the Gospel of Christ, from St. Thomas the Apostle in 52AD that continues even today with a Christian population of 6.2 million in Kerala.

3. *When did you get the call to Priesthood—had you worked before joining the Seminary?*

I was fortunate to grow up in a rigid Catholic atmosphere; family; community and parish; which helped me to develop an inner desire to be a more prayerful and committed Christian as early as 12 years old, and I nurtured within the thoughts about becoming a Missionary Priest. I joined MSFS Seminary 50 km away from home immediately after Year 10 at the age of 15.

In India, anyone who wished to join a seminary for priesthood after taking up a career or job (we call them late vocations) were discouraged totally.

4. *Which Order did you train with and why did you choose it?*

I chose to join the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales, a French Order working globally, doing real mission work.

5. *Tell us about that time—special memories.*

After 3 years of minor Seminary formation as well as completing pre-university studies, I entered one year of novitiate in a distant State, one thousand kilometres away from home, at the end of which I made my first Profession. In 4 years time, out of 42 seminarians only nine survived.

The years of formation were rigorous but fruitful. The three years that followed was a time of intense study in the University as an external student and I graduated in Philosophy and Bachelor of Arts.

Then a year of practical life called Regency, I was assigned as associate administrator of the Provincial House of the Province of Visakhapatnam.

The next 4 years of formation along with seminary life was a real challenge studying Theology, Scripture, Psychology, Church History, Liturgy etc. Failing a second time in any one of the 52 credits in these 4 years was detrimental in the pursuit of a vocation to priesthood.

6. *Where and when were you ordained? Can you tell us any special moments from that day. Do you have a special dedication?*

Six months after being ordained as a Deacon I was promoted to priesthood and was ordained on 30th April, 1989 in my home parish in Kerala of the Archdiocese of Ernakulam, to work as a Missionary Priest in different parts of India or overseas. I consecrated myself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the greater glory of God and at the service of mankind.

7. *Do you have a sense of any special gifts. Has this grown over time?*

I am not sure if you mean spiritual gifts or other.

I am unassuming, friendly and open, I am an artist and look for perfection, good at Architectural proportions, warm hearted, lover of nature, a sense of wonder is always there, hard working, sincere, gift of counselling. All these I hope have grown to better perfections and maturity over the years.

8. *What was your early life as a priest like: where did you go and do?*

As a young priest I was sent to the mission regions. I served as associate priest in the parish missions and schools, served as Assistant Rector and Procurator in the Minor Seminary, studied diploma in Architecture for 3 years in the University College while being Parish Priest of two twinned parishes in the City, worked for S.F.S. publication and became associate editor and Manager of the only publications of the MSFS globally and Administrator of the Spirituality Institute. 14 years in India.

9. *Which countries/parishes have you served in. When did you come to Australia?*

I came to Australia in the year 2003 at the invitation of Cardinal George Pell which was extended to our MSFS Provincial Superiors.

Served at Our Lady of the Annunciation Parish, Page-wood; St. Gabriel's Parish, Bexley; St. Agnes Parish, Matraville, all these around the Airport in the City; and lastly St. Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta; altogether for 15 years.

Now I am here at Moruya for 18 months in the Arch-

diocese of Canberra-Goulburn; all of which have given me a vast experience in clergy way of life.

There are also other 14 priests of our Order working in different diocese of Sydney, Broken Bay, Parramatta, Melbourne and Adelaide.

I have served as Priest only in India and Australia but had my chance to visit Rome, Holy Land, Germany, France, Switzerland, Portugal, Italy, Scotland, England, Greece, Turkey, Malta, Gallipoli, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong which I treasure as a great added education for me.

10. *How do you view the health of the Catholic church, globally and locally?*

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ are not expected to be Angels or otherworldly. They are ordinary people making a faith journey. Imperfections, failures, and short coming are part of human life and are forgiven and perfected in Jesus Christ as they advance in their pilgrim journey to perfection in Heaven.

11. *If you had miraculous powers what would you like to do with them?*

If I had miraculous powers I would continue to do my priestly ministry, maybe a bit more effectively.

As a priest I don't need miraculous powers for my ministry but willingness to serve God in humanity: what I need is only **faithfulness**.

12. *Finally we know you like gardening but what other hobbies and fun things do you enjoy?*

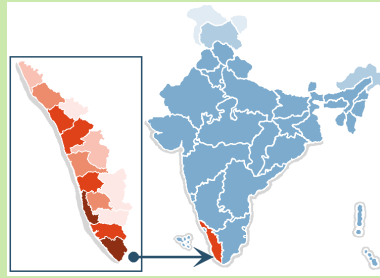
First of all, it is true that I like gardening but not as a hobby. I do gardening at Moruya because there is no one else to do it neither as volunteer or as paid gardener. I just can't tolerate the church, garden and the house looking shabby and unattended. The way our garden looks shows who we are. [If a priest had to do all the gardening himself over and above whatever works he does in the church and presbytery, then it is the failure of the community in being supportive or better organised.]

I enjoy many hobbies, like photography, videography, driving, art works, drawing, painting, printing technology, drama, singing, cooking, bushwalking and graphic designing. And of course I like gardening too.

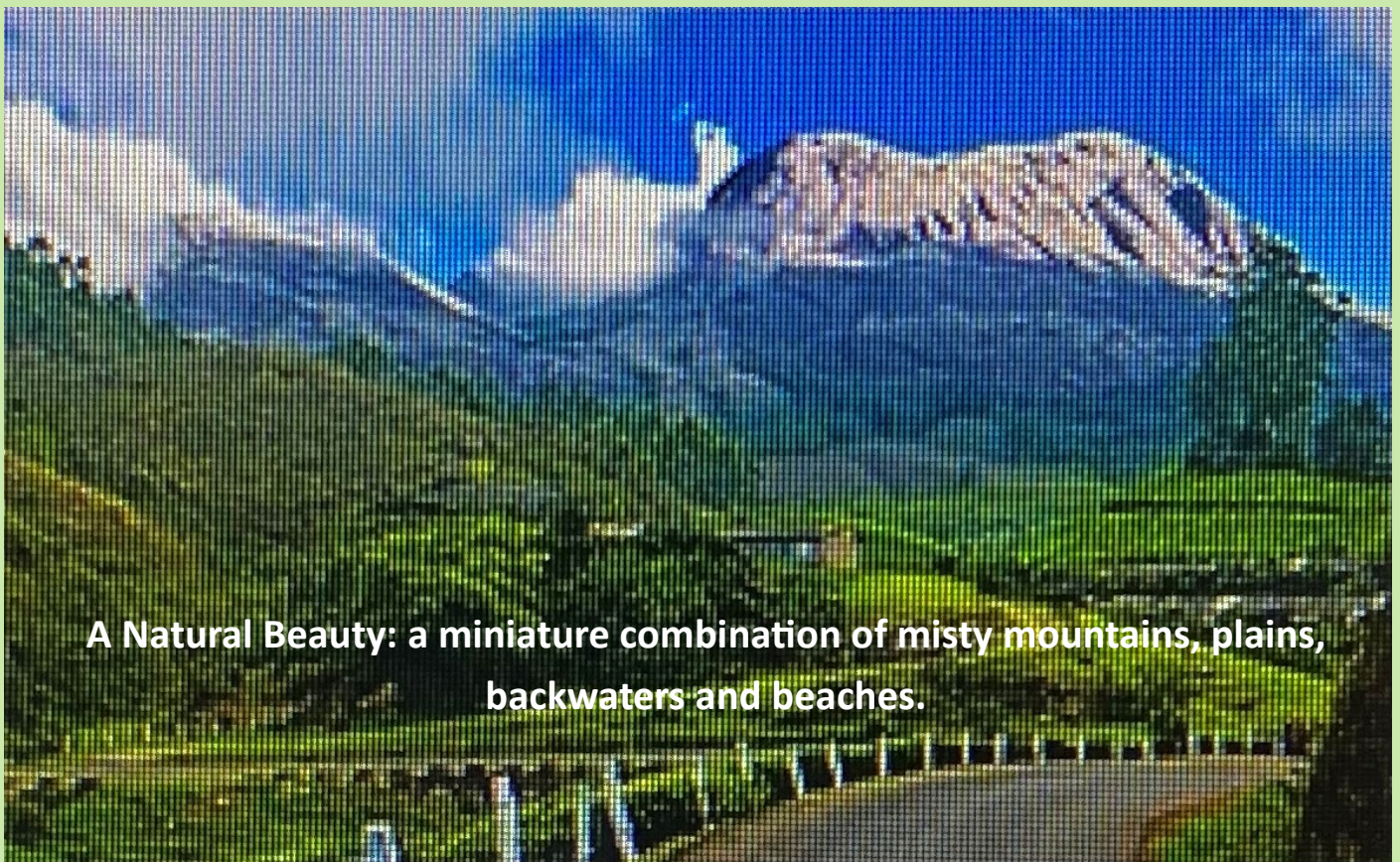
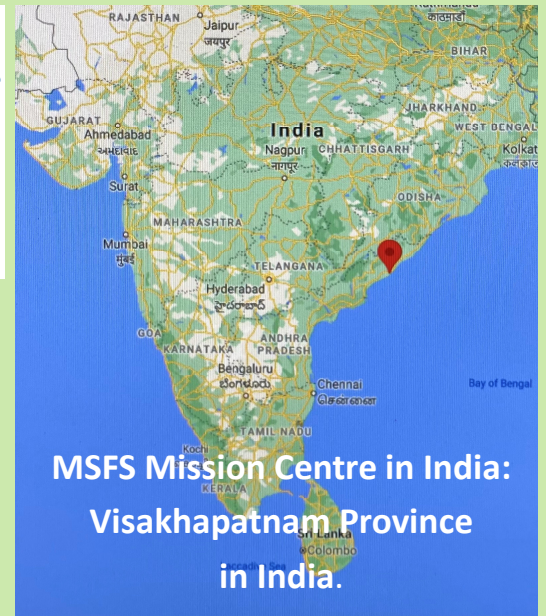
Thank you for asking. Hope I did justice to your queries.

God bless you.

Fr George Azhakath.



Kerala State in the Map of India.



PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL REPORT.

John Munce is coordinating the history of our church and is asking for help to identify photos and mementos from times past

Bodalla Church services now every second month at 9.15 am and every 4th Sunday at 3pm. The PPC has also invited the Bodalla Primary School to attend the Thursday services – hopefully this will come about

The Parish Pastoral Plan is slowly evolving – watch this space for a chance to comment

Jamberoo retreat: the PPC has organized a retreat at Jamberoo Abbey on the 14th, 15th and 16th September. This will be a time of reflection, silence, talks from the Sisters and a communal meal on the Tuesday and Wednesday nights. Please contact Sue 0426820860 for more information.

The new Extraordinary Minister's and Reader's rosters have just been published for July to December 2021. There is only one EM rostered for each Mass, but if extra needed Fr will ask on the day. Please find a replacement if you are unable to attend on your rostered day.

Thanks to Jan Morris, Pauline de Grave and Anne Jeffery for the Sacred Heart bookmarks, Sacred Heart 'brooches' and the confirmation cards and also the Hospitality committee for their help with the Sacred Heart Feast Day and the Confirmation morning teas.

The next National Catholic Life survey is about to be held again. It will be available in our Parish in October 2021. We will get the results on our social profile in 2022.

Hoping for many blessings for each of you till next time

Sue McCosker. Chairperson.



FINANCE COMMITTEE.

John Gillett, Chairperson of the Finance committee has advise that recently:

- **A proposed budget** formulated by Fr. George and John Gillett was distributed to all members of the Finance Committee and submitted to the Diocesan Financial Officer for final perusal prior to adoption. A number of alterations were recommended by the Diocesan Finance Office which have now been integrated into the draft document. The bottom line shows a nominal deficit which we hope to be able to absorb as the year progresses. The Parish finances are significantly

in a better position now than the previous few years, which were plagued by fire, flood and pandemic.

- **Outdoor garden furniture** in the form tables, seating, BBQ table and shade cloth covering have been purchased and the concrete foundation slabs can be seen in the Church grounds adjacent to the church sanctuary. At



the same time a concrete ramp was constructed to allow wheelchair access to the



Church Toilet. The tables and seating will be installed shortly with the shade cover yet to be measured and made up. A Parish appeal was made to assist with these expenses (circa \$16,000) with a phenomenal response from our Pa-

rishioners. The costs of the concreting, tables, and seating has been generously donated. However there's still a \$6,000 deficit for the shade cover, wiring and drainage, if anyone else is able to assist.

- As you will notice, the **Tap and Go** facility is now operating in the Church Foyer. It is set at \$5, however for those who wish to offer more, it's just a matter of additional tapping. e.g. \$10 requires two taps, \$20 requires four taps. Each tap takes 5 - 10 seconds to process so it may take a little patience.

- **Maintenance** work is needed on some loose guttering and downpipes on our Church and there is still some preventative maintenance work to be done on the lead light windows at both Moruya and Bodalla Churches. These are the only perceived major expenses for the year.

On behalf of the P.F.C. I'd like to sincerely thank and congratulate those who generously contributed to the outdoor furniture appeal. You will all no doubt notice the fabulous work Fr. George has done, and is still doing, in the Parish grounds. This will be enhanced with the new furniture which will play host to future recreation and functions in this very beautiful environment.

John extends his best wishes to you all and your Family.





CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.



The Principal, Mrs O'Neil helps to distribute Holy Communion to parents.

St Mary's School Pupils
&
Sacred Heart
Parishioners
Celebrate together.



St Mary's school children lead us in the singing at Mass.