

Parish Priest report 2011 AGM

Welcome: No one person can know the vast operations within our parish. People who are actively involved in some aspects of parish life cannot know everything in every aspect of life. As your parish priest who is supposed to have my hand on the pulse of parish life here at Floreat-Wembley I find it hard to know everything that every group is doing in the parish. I place my trust in them and know that those in charge are capable, responsible people. An AGM is a way of informing the community with very wide brush strokes the pastoral activities that are carried out here, and extend beyond parish boundaries to the wider community, and archdiocese. Our AGM is also an opportunity for us who exercise leadership in our parish to be accountable to you. So, I would like to thank you for coming today and showing interest in our parish. I would especially like to thank those who have given reports for their dedicated service to the parish as well as the many who are involved in practical ways of ministry, leadership, and the care and concern for parishioners.

I'd like to especially thank those I work directly with almost on a daily basis, and upon whom I greatly depend - Mrs. Prue Pupazzoni for her work in running the office and the many who assist her; it is not an easy job. Taking care of the day to day office needs, rosters, and financial records is a time consuming task. Prue does it with much grace and care. She is also there with a friendly ear and a kind word to the many who call in. Life would be much harder without her presence in the office. Fr Vincent Glynn thank you for your friendship, council and guidance and for the many times you have celebrated mass for the community. We thank you for your generosity of time and care to us all. The finance committee under the chair of Mr. Tony Bevan who continues to manage the parish finances well. We manage to come in on budget, but the finances will need to be kept under a close watch considering the financial situation at the present time and into the future. The parish Council under the chair of Mr. Patrick White continues to advise me on the needs of the parish.

During the past year they have been able to instigate several new initiatives for the parish community. The first was the Seniors Christmas Lunch, where they invited and prepared a Christmas dinner for those alone, recently widowed or elderly. Last year 70 parishioners attended the lunch, with this year's lunch being held on the 18 Dec. It is a wonderful way in which the parish is able to do something for those who have been members of the parish family for many years. Another was the parish picnic and bus trip. Last year they traveled to New Norcia, this year to Bunbury and the new cathedral. I commend the parish council for their vision. I would like to express my thanks to Mr. Brian Parry who is retiring from the council. He has committed many years to the parish council and his input has been greatly appreciated. He has earned a well deserved rest. Last year the parish received a commendation for the parish gardens from the Cambridge Council. This is a credit to Mrs. Andrea Whitely and her team who have nurtured and cared for the gardens. With the replanting and the creation of a 'Garden of Eden' on the Grantham Street area, including fruit trees of many kinds the surrounds of the church at St Cecilia's is looking a picture. Some work will be carried out on the lawn in the courtyard to replace the dying areas. At Our Lady of Victories the small garden at the front of the church is a blaze of colour at the moment with petunias. I thank Mr. Brian Parry for his care there. In the coming days the trees around both churches will be pruned and trimmed for safety reasons, and because of some complaints from nearby homes. I wish to thank the parish council and the finance committee for their work in helping me run the parish. Thank you for your guidance, suggestions and more importantly your time and friendship. The parish's relationship with Newman College continues to be strengthened each year. The parish is working with the junior school in implementing the archbishop sacramental programme, for years 3, 4 and 6. This year we celebrated 80 children receiving the sacrament of penance, 45 Eucharist and 41 parish children receiving Confirmation. We have welcomed 59 children through the sacrament of Baptism, married 3 couples, and celebrated 19 parishioners' funerals. It would be remiss of me not to thank the parish choirs and musicians, who each weekend share their talents with us and enrich our parish celebrations of the liturgy. I know that you are sometimes small in numbers, but I want to assure you that you are important in the liturgical life of the parish.

As I look back over the past 12 months as parish priest, we have achieved much as a parish and have shown that we are a parish that cares for those less fortunate than ourselves. We are a parish that has two churches, some would say two communities. I don't agree with that. Yes we have two churches, but I believe we are a united parish family. A community is made up of many different individuals, with differing opinions, faith levels and life. They come from diverse family situations, single, married, widowed, divorced, and separated. We are young and old, some have a modern outlook on their faith, and others are traditional. From all of this diversity we are called to be a 'parish family' united in the common call of being followers of Jesus Christ. The parish of Floreat/Wembley is a welcoming community, a delight to be a part of. Like all parishes there are challenges, and each day new ones arrive on the doorstep and via the phone. Our parish is blest with many volunteers who in many ways reach out to and care for those within and outside of the parish. To all of the

volunteers and those in ministries and on committees I offer my profound thanks for your time, care and concern for your fellow parishioners.

Over the past 24 months the parish has had a few crises to deal with. The greatest was the hail storm that hit in March of last year, causing significant damage to both churches, more so at St Cecilia's. Flooding, broken windows, electrical issues, and damaged carpets. Still today both churches are requiring repairs. Both will need work on the roof and guttering. Our Lady of Victories will require the replacement of gutters etc as well as work on the tiles which have shifted over the years. This work is expected to cost some \$27,500, and will be carried out as soon as possible. The monies to cover this will come from the investment account and the monies set aside for the upkeep of the parish fabric. The work at St Cecilia's is in the hands of the church insurers, and if all goes well will require the replacement of the entire roof and skylight costing some \$250,000. The insurers have also looked at partial replacement of the roofs on the parish office complex and the parish house. The time of the work at St Cecilia's is not known at this present time, we are awaiting the final word from Catholic Church Insurances.

As we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of St Cecilia's church, I hope that we can all as a parish family come together to celebrate this wonderful occasion. We are planning opening and closing masses, and a huge parish picnic to celebrate the 50 years. We have also commissioned Mr. Peter Graham, a Perth sculptor to design and make a sculpture in honor of St Cecilia. It will depict a harp and palm branch symbolizing that she was a martyr of the church and patron of music. It will cost around \$5000, which will be raised from parish donations and a bequest. No parish funds will be used. The sculpture will be placed in the central courtyard. To date we have raised the sum of \$ 1,650.00. The dates for the masses and picnic will be announced soon, as we are waiting on the bishop. The cost of running a parish this size is large, and the church feels the financial strain that is being placed upon us all. We will continue to the best of our ability with your financial help to maintain the fabric of the parish, and the many ministries that it funds. I encourage all parishioners to be a part of the planned giving programme and to contribute as best you can to the programme so that the parish is viable. Like you our electricity, water, rates, gas and insurances have all increased. We also have financial commitments to the archdiocese and the wider church. The pressure upon parish funds is increasing, so if you can increase your donation I would greatly appreciate it.

Like all English speaking churches around the world we are now using the new translation of the mass. The phasing in of the translation has gone reasonably well and we are all slowly getting used to the changes. Yes there have been some grumbles, but the reality is that we are part of the church and the church, like all things changes.

So what lies ahead for our parish community? I hope that we will continue to reach out to those in our community who are in need, especially to the elderly. We are called by Jesus to care for each other and I know the many parish volunteers do that in so many wonderful ways. The challenge is to encourage others to join in this wonderful body of men and women. So I lay down the challenge to you all. Join one of the groups, ministries, committees and become involved in the life of the parish and church. Church isn't just coming on Sunday for 50 mins; it is much more than that. Another challenge is to the youth of the parish to prepare them to accept their place in the parish family. They live in a world that places many various stresses upon their lives. Like many they are finding their way in the world. Our task is to let them know that God is with them every step of the way. We need to be understanding, that for some church is not a priority, but we are called to keep the lines of communication open, so that they feel they belong. This is a challenge to us and to them. The parish sponsored 2 delegates to World Youth Day [WYD] in Spain this year, with Rachel and Gilbert having a wonderful, life changing time. Their report and talk was well received by the parish. Next WYD will be held in South America in 2013, it is hoped we will be able to send delegates again.

You and I are called to be the modern face of Jesus in our world, to reach out to people and live the gospel message in our daily lives. If we all work together we can achieve so much. Many of those who paved the way, the pioneers of the parish community, who have gone before us; have left a wonderful legacy for us to build upon. Let us accept this challenge to do so. Every parish has its problems and issues, but if we work together as a parish family we can achieve much you and I, and overcome the issues that we face. The challenge before us sometimes seems great, but together we can overcome them. I am not the parish; you the people are and you must be prepared to work together as a family to continue the mission that you have begun and to embody your parish motto— Community – Conversion – Mission.

Rev Fr Wayne Davis PP