

# HOLY SPIRIT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## PARISH PRIEST'S REPORT (From Jan-Dec 2014)

There are two key parts to the life of a church - our mission and reason for being. One is to be a place where God's love is proclaimed, where all people can come closer to God, where they can find love, reconciliation, hope, belonging and where they can worship God in spirit and truth. The second is to be a community that is God's hands and feet in the world. For me, it is a great privilege and honour to be part of a parish that does both these things with such grace and goodness.

Of course no community is perfect. No church or group of Christians gets things right all the time. Yet, it is in our imperfection and stumbling attempts, we find Christ's way and love shining. This is the great blessing and beauty of a parish community.

One of the blessings of Holy Spirit Parish is that it is a very exciting place to be every time. So many things have fallen into place over the last twelve months and so many things are still on our plate for attention.

As I look around at what we have been doing I see it very much as part of our overall plan and focus. We are a community that believes strongly in living the love of Christ in real and practical ways. Our parish building, the chapel, parish house, school and its magnificent buildings, the loving care of the gardens and surrounds is all about providing the physical facilities to make our ministry, our practical loving, more efficient, more welcoming, pleasant and volunteer friendly.

We are a parish that values relationships and caring. The work of this past year and the year ahead means we are at a place where people can gather to build connections and reach out to others. The heart of our life together is our life with God. Making sure our facilities are as good and used as wisely as possible, means our worship space is truly a place of prayer, proclamation and praise.

However, our activity has not just been focused on buildings and facilities. They are a key part of the work we do with people and part of the way in which we worship God. Our ministry to families and children is developing through our weekend and week day Eucharist celebrations and Sacramental program. Our Eucharistic celebrations are occasions of welcome and fellowship. Our dedicated parish staff, PPC members, Finance committee generously devote their time and talents for the overall planning and implementation of parish needs. The Holy Spirit Fete committee continues to support financially and communally through their incredible hard work. Our Liturgy group and choir continue to bring joy and delight, to motivate and to glorify God in supporting our celebrations. Our social group of Evergreens firmly engage in their own significant outreach in the community and

beyond. The ever growing education ministry at Holy Spirit catholic school provides a beautiful ambience for academic and religious formation for hundreds of students every year.

The work of St. Vincent de Paul society continues to be a source of encouragement and support to some of the most disadvantaged people. Pastoral ministry at Cherry tree village, Grace Dale, Della dale and other neighbouring care centres means that in very practical and simple ways the love of God is shown to those who are 'housebound'. These ministries are only a few to mention now.

Also as I look at the year ahead, I believe that the biggest challenge in all of the work we do is sustainability and resourcing. Many people have already put in a huge effort to get us this point through their commitments and our ongoing ministries require continued commitment and energy.

I would like to include in this report a few statistics which do show the health of the Parish. There have been 80 baptisms, 93 children were confirmed and 92 children received the sacrament of the Eucharist for the first time this year. There were 11 funerals but only two marriages celebrated in the parish over the year.

Finally I would like to thank you all—for your faithfulness, support, encouragement and work. There are always so many people to thank and it is impossible to include everyone effectively. However, I am only too aware of the contribution you all make in whichever way you can. I do want to particularly mention our parish staff Jenny, Michelle, Kerry, Mary, Ruth and Tina. It has been a joy working with these committed and faithful people. I would like to continue to thank very personally the community of St. Annes/Park Orchards for providing me with safe and proper accommodation. It is a joy being part of this community and I look forward very much to the year ahead, journeying with you, celebrating and worshipping as we step out in faith, trusting always in the gracious God of all.

Fr. Shibu Joseph sac  
Parish Priest  
21.05.2015