

## **PARISH PRIEST'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2015**

I have just completed five years in this parish but this is my sixth AGM. An AGM is a way to inform you, the parishioners with very wide brush-strokes of our parish pastoral activities. Also it is a time to give a report of the past year as well as to look forward to the next year taking into consideration any suggestions or proposals brought by the parishioners. However, it is almost fashionable to have AGMs with only a hand-full of people with some well written reports and this is not restricted to parish AGMs only.

The reports contained in the booklet provide a snapshot of many of the important new initiatives and ongoing ministry that has taken place here over the last year. We are a busy Parish with many programmes, some new and some old. Over the last year we have worked hard to continue to be a place of welcome and to introduce the life of the parish to those who have not previously experienced it through our community outreach, special events and advertising. One of the happiest examples of our welcoming culture over the past year was our Easter and Christmas celebrations. We had a significant increase on participation compared to many previous years. We are very grateful to all those who assisted with the various Easter and Christmas Masses and events. We welcomed Prep children and their families with traditional sausage and sizzle on 1st March 2015 at 10.30 Mass. Also we welcomed during the year many new members into our parish community.

We were blessed to have bishop Mark Edwards thrice in our parish in the last year. The first visit was to spend some time together with me in prayer on Thursday, 5th of March. Secondly he came over to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation and the third one was on the occasion of opening the Year of Mercy on Sunday 29th November. Thanks to his continuous shepherding and support extended to our parish family. Our parish based and school supported sacramental programs run very effectively. Last year, we had 65 candidates for Confirmation. 76 received their First Holy Communion. We had 96 Baptisms of Children and 2 adults were baptised through the RCIA program. There were 13 Funerals in all.

I would like to express my sincere thanks here to Michelle Sheriff who worked excellently in her role as the Coordinator of Parish Religious Program. Her dedication and above all her very presence in the parish

meant a lot. We wish her well. Also we welcome Ana Saro who has been appointed to coordinate the after school religious education program.

We continue to ensure that those who would otherwise be dis-connected from us due to illness or infirmity continue to be lovingly cared for through pastoral visits in homes, hospitals and care centers. The re-assuring presence of someone visiting on behalf of the parish is always greatly valued. Also there is opportunity for anyone who is sick to participate our First Friday Mass with anointing the sick. Being a caring community is a vital sign of what it means to be a healthy Church.

Our Primary School supports the students, through their faith formation and education in general, to be able to live their faith in everyday interactions. Thanks to the principal and staff in realizing this through their hard work. The Parish Council has been functioning well with the help of its dedicated members. They meet monthly and listen to the reports of different groups engaged in different pastoral ministries in our parish. Thanks to the Parish Council particularly to Stan Fisher for his role as chairperson. The Finance Committee, under the leadership of Silvio has looked after the matters pertaining to their field and I am grateful to them for their timely advice and action. Our parish finances are sound though suffer from increasing annual costs and from reducing thanksgiving contributions. We have sought the help of Parish Development office in the Archdiocese to revamp the planned thanksgiving contribution from the year 2016. We need to ensure financial stability for the future. One tangible way of supporting the Parish for many years to come would be for those of us who love Holy Spirit to leave a bequest in our Wills. For example, if every member of the Parish who was able to do so arranged for a sum of \$5,000 or so to be given from their Estate to the parish after their death this would ensure the continuing growth of financial stability in the future.

I am privileged to minister with a gifted and enthusiastic parish Staff Team. I would like thank all of them for their great dedication and enormous efforts for the smooth running of Holy Spirit.

To end, I would like to express my sincere thanks to ALL COMMITTEES, VOLUNTEERS and INDIVIDUALS for their tireless efforts making Holy Spirit Parish community a special place to be. May our parish Patron, Holy Spirit, fill us with love and faith so that we grow as a parish into a body of Christ, with values of the Gospel.

## **Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

**Come Holy Spirit, breathe down upon our troubled world.  
Shake the tired foundations of our crumbling institutions.  
Break the rules that keep you out of our sacred spaces,  
and from the dust and rubble, gather up the seedlings of a new  
creation.**

**Come Holy Spirit, enflame once more the dying embers of our  
weariness.  
Shake us out of our complacency. Whisper our names once more,  
and scatter your gifts of grace with wild abandon.  
Break open the prisons of our inner being,  
and let your raging justice be our sign of liberty.**

**Come Holy Spirit and lead us to places we would rather not go.  
Expand the horizons of our limited imaginations.  
Awaken in our souls dangerous dreams for new tomorrow,  
and rekindle in our hearts the fire of prophetic enthusiasm.**

**Come Holy Spirit, whose justice outwits international conspiracy,  
whose light outshines religious bigotry,  
whose peace can halt our patriarchal hunger for dominance and  
control,  
whose promise invigorates our every effort:  
to create a new heaven and a new earth, now and forever. Amen.**

Diarmuid O'Murchu