

**PARISH AGM, HOLY SPIRIT, RINGWOOD NORTH**  
**PARISH PRIEST'S REPORT (From Jan-Dec 2016)**

This is the seventh year of my life with this parish community of Holy Spirit. Over the last 45 years the important role played by our Parish and School communities has helped a wide range of people. We stand as a source of spiritual motivation, welfare and support in a variety of forms across the local community. It is our aim to continue to provide strong support in areas of need. But we cannot continue to do this without the generosity of people such as you. There is much we can thank God for in the unfolding life of our parish community, even though we struggle in many ways.

We have already seen detailed reports from different groups serving in our parish. Uniquely our parish family is about worship and mission. A worthy celebration of Eucharist in weekend and weekday is our highest priority. The liturgy is the best teacher of what it means to be Catholic. We are really blessed with a great extent of parish involvement in the liturgy and the other ministries which are pastoral in nature. The Liturgical preparations which include welcoming, reading, singing, special ministries, altar serving and other activities that serve the liturgy indirectly - setting up the church, role of sacristans etc. - enable the liturgy to be celebrated with reverence and as a truly communal event and so our thanks to all who contribute.

We see the parish developing because of the great dedication and sacrifices by many members of the community and the parish staff. It is always amazing to see the significant number of people involved in different ministries in the parish.

Over the past year, 81 children were baptised in our church, with parents attending the monthly baptism preparation session. We also received two adults into full communion with the church at Easter after successfully completing various stages of formation through RCIA. During the year, we celebrated one catholic wedding, though it was not in the church. In May 2016, 75 young people received the sacrament of Confirmation after completing their training in School or in High Spirit and 71 children received the sacrament of the Eucharist for the first time. For all Sacraments, families attended information nights and workshops to deepen, firstly, their own faith and to prepare their children for the important moments of their faith journey. Many thanks to Ana Saro, the Parish RE leader and Marianne, the school RE Coordinator for their leadership roles.

During the year 2016, 21 funerals were celebrated. We try our best to ensure that the last rites and funeral celebrations are carried out with dignity and love. We receive many comments of appreciation for the deeply Catholic spirit which underpins even the simplest of our funerals services.

The ever growing parish education ministry at Holy Spirit catholic school provides a beautiful ambience for academic and religious formation for hundreds of students every year. Peter Camilleri, after 16 years of selfless service retired in March 2016 and Sue Johnston was appointed as the Acting Principal until the end of the year. Holy Spirit Parish is ever grateful for their compassionate leadership and generous collaboration. After the normal process of recruitment, Duncan Arendse was appointed as the new principal from the first term of 2017. We wish him all the best.

I would like to express my sincere and special gratitude to the parish staff. It has been a joy and privilege working with these committed and faithful people. I want to appreciate and acknowledge initiatives taken by Mary Ryan to make the great Jubilee Year of Mercy tangible and meaningful. Thank you Stan Fisher, the PPC chairperson and all PPC members, Silvio, FC chairperson and all Finance Committee members, the Liturgy Committee, members of all other groups and so many parishioners who serve their parish in such a diverse range of ministries. These ministries are well structured and they have offered their services with reliability and dedication and as a result efficiently and effectively.

There is always need for more, and obviously there will always be room for improvement. The Mass count of the year and even just an observation alone at Mass gives the impression that numbers are dropping. There could be many reasons for the decline. This is off-course a cause of some concern. We encourage everyone to be part of our Eucharistic Celebration to foster a true Catholic faith and a deep sense of belonging to a faith community. Our new project, *Renovation @ Holy Spirit* led by Mary Ryan is a great opportunity for the parish renewal and the New Evangelisation. This is our time to be involved, this is our time to make a difference!

Finally, I want to thank you all personally for your ongoing love, support and prayers even much more than I deserve. I want to thank you for your financial contribution to the presbytery. Indeed this is an important source of income to meet the cost of daily living for the parish priest and some running costs of the presbytery. It is also a source of income for the Indian Epiphany Province of the Pallottines in the formation and maintenance of Priests. I am grateful to the parish community of Park Orchards for providing me with safe and apt accommodation.

Thank you once again for listening and for your support past and present. May our patron Holy Spirit, bless us all abundantly.

Fr. Shibu Joseph sac

Parish Priest

18.05.2017