



Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

Year In Review 2021





Acknowledgement of Country

The Diocese of Sandhurst recognises the traditional owners of the lands upon which we live, serve and worship.

We acknowledge the people of the Northeastern regions of our Diocese, Djilmathang, Minjambuta, Duduroa and Waywurru.

We acknowledge the people of the Southern regions of our Diocese, the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Taungerung.

We acknowledge the people of the Northern regions of our Diocese, the Yorta Yorta and Bangerang.

We acknowledge the people of the Western regions of our Diocese, the Baraparapa peoples.

We respectfully honour and acknowledge their ongoing custodianship and their connections to the land, waters and animals.

We pay our respects to their culture, their Elders, past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of their peoples.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and commit ourselves to actively working alongside First Nations people for healing, reconciliation and justice.

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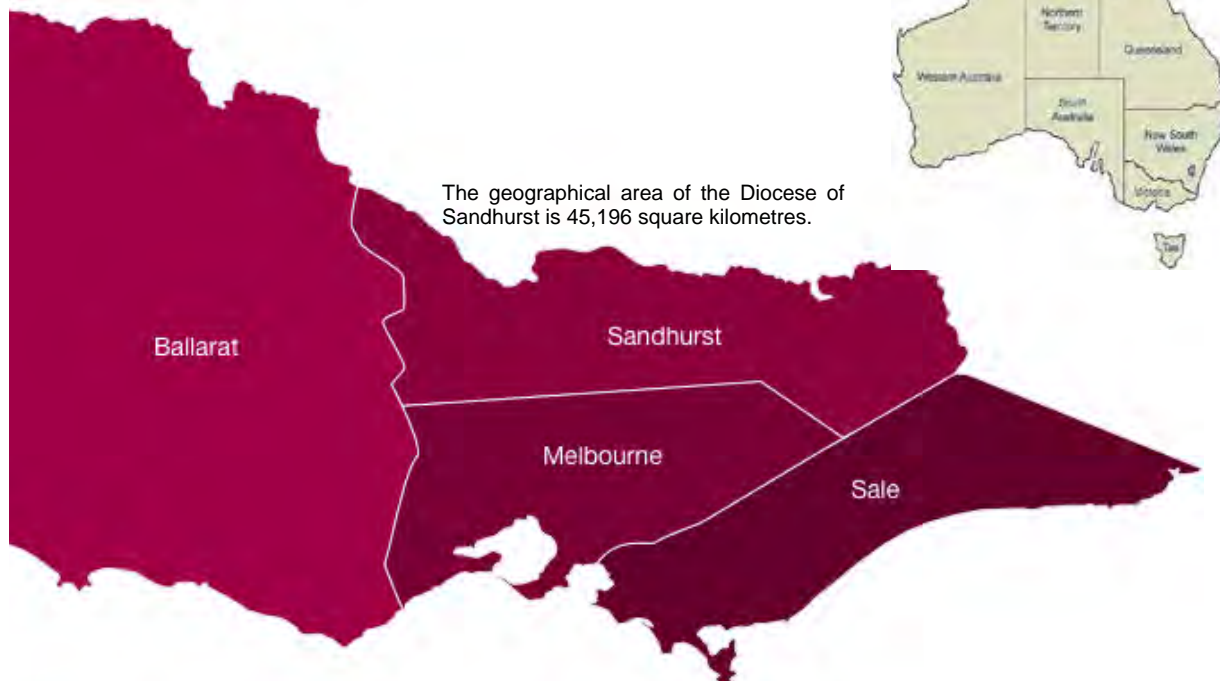
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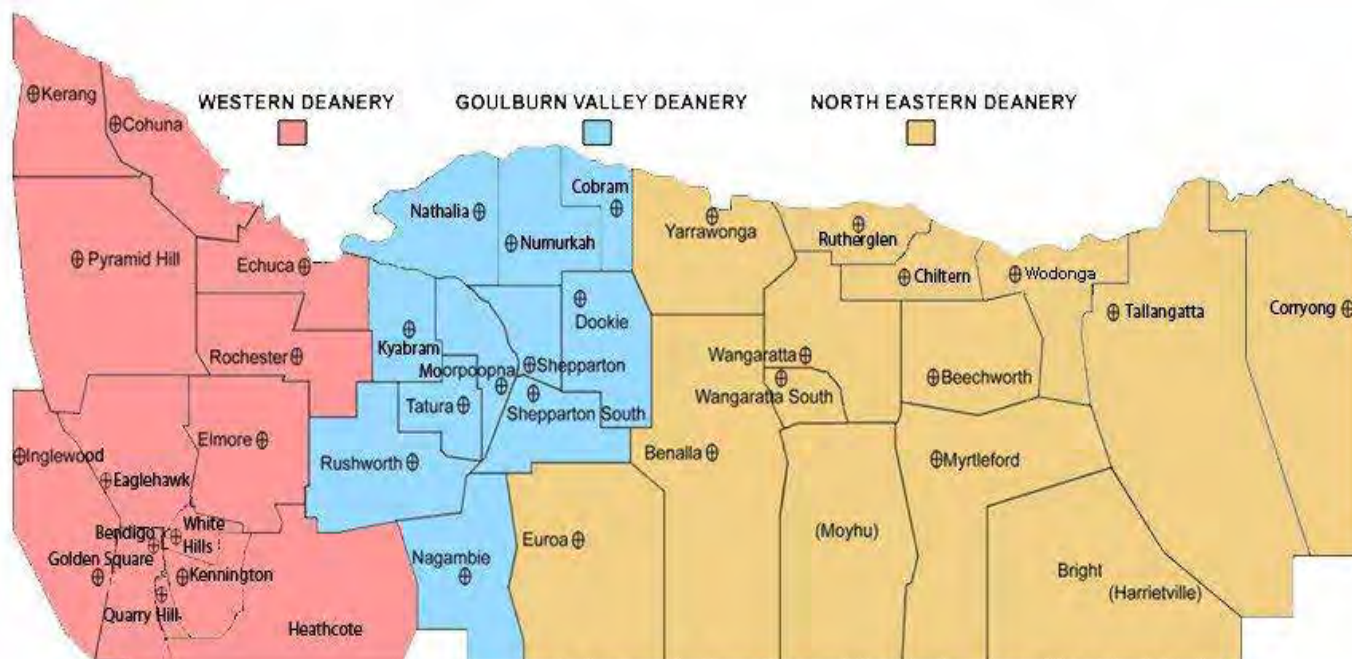
The Diocese

Australia

Victoria



Diocese of Sandhurst



The map above of the Diocese is a representation only and may not accurately reflect parish boundaries.

For thousands and thousands of years, the Sandhurst area was inhabited by Aboriginal people. European settlement to the area commenced in the late 1830s and, by the 1850s, there was rapid movement of Europeans to the gold-rush centres and rich pastoral areas; Catholic missions were soon established to meet the spiritual and pastoral needs of these pioneers.

The territory of the Diocese of Sandhurst was officially excised from Diocese of Melbourne and erected as a diocese on 30 March 1874. When the ecclesiastical Province of Melbourne was established in 1887, the Diocese of Sandhurst became a suffragan diocese of the Metropolitan See of Melbourne.

Sandhurst in Country

Throughout Sandhurst there are many Lands, Tribes and Clan groups. This artwork is intended to teach about our home and communities, a union of our day-to-day lives and the old living culture embedded in the landscape. This is Sandhurst in Country, our layered foundation.

These rich and diverse lands are colour-coordinated according to the Registered Aboriginal Parties of Victoria. Coloured in red and gold line-work are contested grounds, the result of devastation and dispossession of culture and knowledge, a reminder of healing still to come.

Ultimately, we are looking at a 'to scale' map of Sandhurst Diocese which includes major towns, roads and, of course, the back roads that the office staff are fond of. Every town which has a Sandhurst school is mapped out in black dots connected by the roads which are filled with pattern.

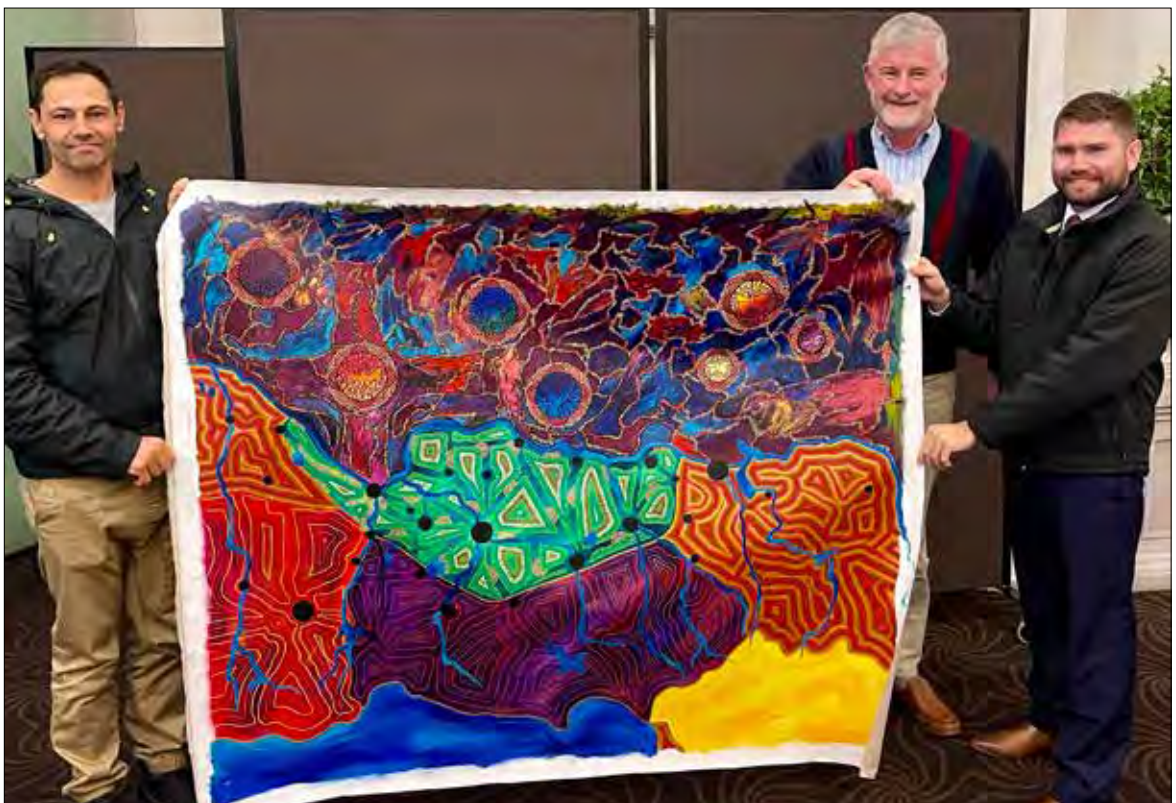
The point of this is to have staff connected to this country through familiarity; memories of long drives through country and thoughts of stories experienced from the day before and the day to come. It is through this that we realise the number of tribal areas, sacred sites, important landmarks, hunting grounds and places of conflict that we pass through, pass by, or work in, unnoticed and unaware.

It is here, below the stained glass of our Church, below the Red Rose and the Paderborn Cross that we have our home, our country, our communities and, importantly, the stories of the future being laid out within the work we do; the foundation of education.

Artist's Statement

Artist: Troy Firebrace

Medium: Acrylic on Linen



Catholic Education Sandhurst Aboriginal Education Officers, Michael Chisholm (left) and Troy Firebrace (far right), present the artwork "Sandhurst In Country" to Bishop Shane Mackinlay at the Sandhurst Priests' In-service in August 2021.

Our Organisation

93,000+	Catholics in the region
40	Parishes
48	Clergy
9	Religious Congregations
40	Religious
3018	Employees
1	Hospital
4	Homes for Aged
56	Schools
19,714	Students

MINISTRIES OF THE DIOCESAN CHURCH

- Bishop's Office
- Diocesan Historical Commission Archives
- Diocesan Vocations Ministry
- Mission and Pastoral Life
- Marriage Preparation
- Roman Catholic Trusts Corporation for the Diocese of Sandhurst
- Sacred Music
- Sandhurst Clergy Health and Wellbeing
- Sandhurst Youth Ministry
- Sandhurst Retired Priests' Foundation
- Finance Office
- Marriage Tribunal
- Media and Communications Office
- Adult Faith Education
- Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd Board
- CatholicCare Social Services
- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)
- Caritas Australia
- Catholic Mission
- Clergy Life and Ministry
- Council of Priests
- College of Consultors
- Diocesan Development Fund
- Diocesan Finance Council

PARISH MINISTRIES

- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
- Pastoral Associates Network
- Baptism
- Sacramental Programs
- Marriage Preparation Outreach
- Bereavement Outreach
- Catholic Women's League
- Knights of the Southern Cross
- Youth Ministry Groups
- Legion of Mary
- Children's Liturgy
- Faith Formation
- Anointing Masses
- Communion to the Sick and Aged
- Home Visitation Groups
- Funeral Ministry
- St Vincent de Paul Conferences
- Hospitality, Catering and Welcoming Groups
- MenALIVE
- Holy Hour/Benediction
- Home Masses
- Fundraising Groups
- Music Team/Choir
- School Masses
- Social Groups
- Pastoral Care Teams
- Rosary Groups
- Prayer Groups
- Prison Chaplaincy
- Teams of Our Lady
- Serra Club
- Adoration and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament
- Lenten and Advent Groups
- E-conferences
- Spirituality in the Pub
- Divine Will
- Catholic Charismatic Renewal

Our Diocese's Vision

‘That every person’s heart be
inflamed by the love of God’.



Clergy of the Diocese of Sandhurst with seminarians and altar servers after the Chrism Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo, 30 March 2021.



From

Bishop Shane Mackinlay

As we began 2021, we looked forward with a sense of cautious optimism. Vaccines were approved and had begun to be distributed; we had flattened the curve; schools had finished the year with face-to-face classes, and crowds had been able to gather for Christmas celebrations, even if we did have to wear masks and apply social distancing. Surely the coming year couldn't be as bad as 2020?

We were partly right and partly wrong. Vaccinations arrived and people across the country have taken every opportunity to use them. But, just as vaccines were being rolled out, the Delta variant arrived, and so we have endured another year of lockdowns, remote schooling, businesses closed, and plans cancelled or postponed.

This year has also brought new challenges. In the second year of the pandemic, we have seen more uncertainty, frustration, impatience, mistrust and even anger. Some people have been so distressed that they have accepted they cannot continue in their employment. Our communities have been divided, with limits on who can participate. And, in recent months, the Omicron variant has reminded us just how volatile and disruptive this global pandemic continues to be in our interconnected world.

The human cost has grown too, as we have had another year of limited contact with family and friends, of grandchildren growing up without seeing their grandparents, of being separated from family members overseas, of being unable to visit loved ones who have been sick, or even died.

And yet, as was the case in 2020, the resilience and resourcefulness of the Catholic community has also provided meaningful connection and a sense of hope. Across the Diocese our parishes, schools and social services have continued adapting their ministries to circumstances as they changed, at times quite dramatically and at very short notice. I remain encouraged and inspired by the commitment of our communities to expressing and nourishing our Christian identity and mission as God's Church.

In the Chancery, we have continued taking steps to implement the recommendations of the Go Forth report that was published at the end of 2020. In early May I was very pleased to appoint Dr Chris Cotter as the Director of Mission and Pastoral Life, and plans are being developed for the establishment of a Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Council.

The Australian Church has also demonstrated remarkable flexibility in staging the First Assembly of the Plenary Council; originally planned as a face-to-face event in Adelaide, then as a hybrid of state-based face-to-face hubs with online plenaries and small group sessions.

The First Assembly was finally celebrated as a wholly online event in early October. Many wondered if it would be possible for the 276 Plenary Council Members to meet, deliberate, pray, and discern the movements of the spirit online. And yet, amid widespread restrictions and local lockdowns we did – thanks to the ingenuity and hard work of the national Facilitation Team and our local co-ordination team. In Sandhurst, four of the five Members, three Facilitators and a few support staff were blessed to be able to gather in a local hub at the Chancery in Bendigo.

I look forward to the Plenary Council's ongoing process of discernment, which will culminate with the celebration of the Second Assembly in Sydney in July 2022, and the implementation phase to follow. It is notable that our own Plenary Council is contributing to a broader commitment by the Universal Church, with similar processes in some other countries and Pope Francis announcing that the 16th Synod of Bishops "For a synodal Church" would include a world-wide consultation of the People of God. I encourage you to participate in the Synod consultation and ask for your prayers for both the Plenary Council and the Synod.

Looking back on 2021, I am very conscious that these are just some of the signs of Christ's enduring presence among us. There is much to give thanks for and still more that the Holy Spirit is yet to accomplish in us and through us. Whatever the new year brings, let us continue to walk together, supporting each other and trusting in God's faithfulness and love.



Most Rev. Shane Mackinlay DD PhD
Bishop of Sandhurst



“I believe that we have so much to look forward to, secure in the knowledge that we can face reality and respond with an attitude that is open, flexible, adaptive and led by the Spirit.”

From the

Director of Mission and Pastoral Life

It is my pleasure to write the inaugural report from the office of the Director of Mission and Pastoral Life. The formulation of the role was a key recommendation of the 2020 Go Forth review. My primary objectives are to support the Bishop of Sandhurst with the missionary focus and aspirations of the Diocese through co-ordination of the activities of the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council, the parish visitation program, engagement with the Plenary Council and the existing roles of Adult Faith Education, Youth Ministry and Communications. It is such a privilege to be working with the people of God here in the Sandhurst Diocese, clergy and lay alike, as we participate in God's life-giving mission.

I began as Director of Mission and Pastoral Life in mid-July, a few days after the fifth lockdown of the pandemic was announced by the Premier of Victoria. In the following weeks I met and established working relationships with the members of the Chancery Mission and Pastoral Life Team (Lyn Breen, Ruth Lawlor and Katrina Strong), the network of Pastoral Associates and the Council of Priests. All of this happened online. It was very strange. In other ways it was also very familiar, with the ongoing disruption to our life in common and particularly as Church since March 2020. Many of the recognisable rituals relating to the practice of our faith have been stopped, curtailed, interrupted for a while, or seemingly permanently modified in some way or other. In the face of all this there is an understandable yearning to “get back to normal”, as things were before the pandemic. Whether we ever do “get back to normal” or not, seems to me to be out of our control. Perhaps there is another way to face the reality of a pandemic that imposes a “new normal” on us?

Last year the Holy Father, Pope Francis said that the time of the virus can become a *kairos* time for the Church, a favourable moment of which to take advantage. At another time he observed that:

“... this is the propitious time to find the courage for a new imagination of the possible, with the realism that only the Gospel can offer. The Spirit, who does not allow himself to be locked up or used within fixed or transient schemes, modalities and structures, proposes to unite us to his movement capable of ‘making all things new’ (Rev 21:5).”

At our annual Priests and Pastoral Associates Meeting (on Zoom of course!) in September, we invited participants to consider how the ongoing pandemic had shifted parish priorities now and into the future. It was a rich and challenging conversation, with clergy and lay leaders offering many different perspectives and an extraordinary witness to their faith.

These included: an invitation to wait and sit in uncertainty, a conviction that the parish “will not be the same”, an exhortation to “live in the present moment, [and] take time to listen to and share people's stories”, and one who “looked to the Plenary Council to give hope”. I would like to highlight a couple of ways in which the Plenary Council has already given us hope.

First, the fact that we were able to celebrate the First Assembly in early October amid lockdowns and restrictions was quite miraculous. A year ago, we would have thought it impossible or at least improbable that the 276 Members would be able to actively participate in a momentous week of prayer and discernment online. This demonstrates what is possible when we, as a Church, face reality with imagination and creativity and are prepared to do a whole lot of work. Of course, the Plenary Council journey is ongoing and there is still much to do.

I am very grateful to the Chancery staff, many of whom gave up their office spaces and worked from home to allow the five Sandhurst Members (Bishop Shane, Father Joe Taylor, Father Brian Boyle, Cathy Jenkins and Ruth Lawlor) and the three Facilitators (Audrey Brown, David Walker and me) to form a local hub in the Chancery at Bendigo whilst we were under restrictions. I am also grateful to Lyn Breen and Katrina Strong for providing liturgical and communications support, both prior to and during the Assembly week.

Second, the Plenary Council has influenced the process for the 16th Ordinary Synod of Bishops. Taking a lead from the Listening and Dialogue phase of the Plenary Council, the Synod has undertaken a massive global consultation on what it means to be a “synodal” Church. The determination of the Synod to listen to the voices of the people of God everywhere is unprecedented and indicates that a Universal Church can learn and find new ways of doing things.

I am very grateful for the work of the Chancery Mission and Pastoral Life Team: Lyn Breen (Adult Faith Education Coordinator), Ruth Lawlor (Youth Ministry Coordinator) and Katrina Strong (Communications Officer). Lyn, Ruth, and Katrina model an adaptive, flexible and good-humoured approach to their diverse and demanding ministries.

After sixteen years as Adult Faith Education Coordinator Lyn Breen will retire in late January 2022. A woman of deep faith, Lyn has served with commitment, passion, and skill. Many parishioners have had their experience of faith deepened and enriched thanks to the resources, programs, seminars, and reflection days that Lyn has developed, facilitated, and organised.



Lyn's departure will create a significant gap in the expertise of the Team. Therefore, discernment is taking place as to how we might continue this important ministry and meet the current and future needs of the people of God in our Diocese with a recruitment process to be undertaken in early 2022.

As well as significant change in the Team, the new year brings our Diocese the opportunity to implement one of the key recommendations of the 2020 Go Forth review: a Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Council. I understand that this is a much hoped for development. And, as I write, the pandemic seems to be gathering serious momentum once more, this time with help from the Omicron variant.

Again, I offer the counsel of **Pope Francis**:

"Faith grants us a realistic and creative imagination, one capable of abandoning the mentality of repetition, substitution and maintenance ... to face reality without fear"

I believe that we have so much to look forward to, secure in the knowledge that we can face reality and respond with an attitude that is open, flexible, adaptive and led by the Spirit.

Dr Chris Cotter

Director of Mission and Pastoral Life
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst



“I am truly grateful for the committed service shown by the team of hard-working professionals I am proud to lead ...”

From the Business Manager

My love for you will not be shaken and my covenant of peace with you will never be removed.

(Isaiah 54:10)

Jesus, through one of the most well-known maxims ascribed to him, outlines the fundamental purpose of his life. He states: “I have come that you may have life and have it to the full” (Jn 10:10). In life we each experience highs and lows and, as we have continued to live through a global pandemic again during this past year, we can speak to experiences that evoke a broad range of emotions. I have thought about what it means to “have life to the full”. Working in the Chancery for our parishes and diocesan agencies is, for me, about service to others. Let me elaborate on what this has looked like for the Diocesan Business Manager during 2021.

The Diocesan Finance Council recommended a budget to the Bishop for approval and for the 2020/21 financial year. It was with a sense of service to others that the Chancery Team embarked on delivering on those financial expectations in order to support the many diocesan works during a period of great uncertainty. I am pleased to report that we met those expectations and, in doing so, supported many new initiatives which have met the financial obligations held by a Diocesan Bishop.

The Commonwealth Government’s Redress Scheme, in which the Diocese is a participant, entered its third year of operation. To date, we have participated in the finalisation of nine applications and made payments amounting to \$564,000 to survivors of historical sexual abuse. Financial compensation on its own is never enough to repair the harm inflicted, but financial resources can assist survivors to move towards healing and rebuilding their lives. It is important that we continue to be able to meet our obligations in this regard. Stewardship of our financial resources, in the context of what it means to be a synodal or listening church, are key areas of our focus and planning.

Such has been the call on Church resources to fund compensation payments nationally. Catholic Church Insurances (CCI) undertook a capital raising from shareholders in July to ensure it can meet on behalf of policyholders the rising costs of civil claims.

In total, \$170m in new capital was raised and Sandhurst contributed \$2.4m in return for increasing its shareholding in the Company. It is expected that sufficient funds have been provided from the CCI capital raising to meet the future cost of abuse claims. The Diocese has had one civil case mediated this year.

The Diocesan Development Fund (DDF) has continued to be an important service provider for parishes and agencies of the Diocese. Despite the frequent interruption to schools due to COVID, there was a continued call for new loans to fund capital works. Loans totalling \$18.6m were recommended by the Advisory Board to the Bishop during the 2020/21 financial year. The equity held by the Diocese in the fund grew to \$29.1m. All this new loan activity occurred against a backdrop of the Reserve Bank of Australia maintaining the official cash rate at historical lows of 0.10% for much of the year.



Cameron Fraser with Executive Assistant, Sally Holmes, at the Chancery. Images of former Sandhurst Bishops are behind them.

The Finance Office staff continue to engage with a range of clergy, parish, and school staff. Financial reporting and the added workload in submitting applications for support from State and Commonwealth Government packages for Jobkeeper and Cashflow boost incentives was of tremendous assistance during the lockdowns when we also moved to online broadcasting of Mass due to closure of Churches.

There was a significant additional workload imposed on the Finance Office staff. The team, Win Butler, Debbie Lambert and Jody Austin, under the leadership of Peter Trendos, all went above and beyond the call of duty to make sure financial assistance was provided to parishes.

There is an increasing call for the involvement of Mr Garry Dewhirst for his **Human Resources** expertise. Garry has extensive knowledge of the sector and has worked with many people across the Diocese to ensure the provision of sound and timely advice. Employment contracts and contemporary workplace policy are areas of keen interest and Garry has kept us informed about how we can best support staff working from home, encouraging more flexible workplace arrangements.

The work of the **Diocesan Projects** office continued unabated under the direction of Mr Alastair Greenall. Major maintenance works to Sacred Heart Cathedral, in particular the roof and past water damage in the sacristy were undertaken.

The subdivision at Sandhurst Crest was completed and the second stage of the residential subdivision in Numurkah got underway.

The roof of St Mel's Christ the King Church in Shepparton South was finally replaced and, it has been said by some that, the roof will now be watertight for the first time since the Church was constructed in 1970.

Major projects are currently in the pipeline for St Monica's Church in Kangaroo Flat, delivering on the commitment to provide improved multi-purpose space following the sale of St Mary's Church in Golden Square.

Finally, I'd like to draw your attention to the financial information provided on the Diocese and Diocesan Development Fund in the final pages of this Year in Review 2021.

I am truly grateful for the committed service shown by the team of hard-working professionals I am proud to lead. With them, we are called to serve. Alongside them, as we live through the teachings of the Gospel, we will be provided with lifelong learning experiences and have life to the full.

Mr Cameron Fraser
Business Manager
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst



St Mel's Christ the King Church in Shepparton South (above) is now watertight, as is Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo (below).





“Sandhurst schools are thriving places of contemporary learning, where the Faith is celebrated and the child is at the heart of every endeavour.”

Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd

2021 marked the 200th anniversary of Catholic education across Australia. The first Catholic school in Australia was founded in October 1820 by Irish Catholic priest, John Therry. The school, situated in Hunter Street, Parramatta, taught 31 students – seven of whom were Protestants. An Irish Catholic convict, named George Marley opened the school for Fr Therry and ran it for three years. From very humble beginnings Catholic schooling has grown to become the nation’s largest education system outside the government sector. We are a vibrant system of over 780,000 students and employ over 100,000 staff across 1,760 schools.

Sandhurst Catholic schools are part of a long tradition of Catholic education in Australia. The history of Catholic schools within the Diocese of Sandhurst spans 168 years. Over the decades, the network of schools has made a unique contribution to the life, faith practice, spirit, and culture of parishes throughout this region. Countless thousands of young people have benefited from the experiences they had and the skills they acquired in Catholic learning environments. From humble origins on the Bendigo goldfields in 1853, Catholic education has grown dramatically. Today, Sandhurst schools are thriving places of contemporary learning, where the Faith is celebrated and the child is at the heart of every endeavour.

Early in his Papacy, Pope Francis spoke to Catholic educators across the world, imploring them to offer the very best of learning experiences and environments to the young. His words formed the foundation of the work that we in Catholic Education Sandhurst pursued during the challenging times of 2021.

“An education in the fullness of humanity should be the defining feature of Catholic schools. Speaking about a Catholic education is equivalent to speaking about the human, about humanism. An inclusive education finds a place for all and does not select in an elitist way the beneficiaries of its efforts”.

(Pope Francis, 7 December 2015)

As I reflect upon the year that was 2021, Pope Francis’ exhortation remains clearly in my thinking. Catholic schools aspire to provide a uniquely rich experience which forms the child as an individual who is capable

of thinking for herself/himself, able to make decisions based upon integrity, compassion, faith and wisdom. As we embarked upon 2021, we did so with confidence in the knowledge that our work with and for the students, was purposeful and served society well. We carried with us five key foundations for this confidence:

- An important feature of education is that the educator serves as role model for those in their care.
- Our Catholic schools offer high-quality education.
- Regular experience of the Catholic Faith is important in developing a strong religious foundation.
- The school helps bring the student into the life of the parish.
- Catholic education is accessible and affordable for all who seek it.

Throughout 2021, three important features could not be ignored or downplayed. First, responding to State Government policy changes, and after many months of careful planning, the Diocese of Sandhurst moved to a new model of governance for its schools. A company limited by guarantee was formed to oversee the delivery of education in all diocesan primary and secondary environments – Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited. A subsidiary company, Sandhurst Catholic Early Childhood Education & Care Limited, was born at the same time, with the purpose of overseeing the development of Catholic kindergartens. Both systems are overseen by Boards which serve as representatives of the Bishop of Sandhurst. Both Boards have Committees which work closely with CES personnel to support schools in their endeavours.

Second, education across the globe has been interrupted regularly by COVID-19. This continued throughout 2021 and every Sandhurst educational community was restricted by the impact of the virus. School closures, deep cleaning, illness, fear of the unknown, loss of income, remote learning and regular testing were commonplace. One admirable feature of this impact was the manner in which our schools coped. Quality teaching, learning and care continued. Schools and families are to be commended for the creativity and effort that was devoted to ensuring each student was in no way disadvantaged.

Third, we farewelled some long-serving Principals of Sandhurst schools, women and men who have given generously to help build a system of schools that improves the lives of our young on a daily basis. I offer great thanks to:

- Mrs Lucy Keith (St Joseph's PS, Cobram)
- Mrs Zoe Nugent (Sacred Heart PS, Corryong)
- Mr Brendan Atley (St Mary's PS, Echuca)
- Mr Matthew Mann (St Therese's PS, Kennington)
- Mr Leo Jones (St Joseph's PS, Nagambie)
- Mrs Colleen Hampson (St Patrick's PS, Pyramid Hill)
- Mr Terry Corrigan (St Patrick's PS, Wangaratta)
- Mr Mark Walsh (Our Lady's PS, Wangaratta South)
- Mrs Joanne Rock (FCJ College, Benalla)
- Mr Michael Delaney (St Joseph's College, Echuca)
- Mr Bernard Neal (Galen Catholic College, Wangaratta).

Catholic Education Sandhurst educates more than 19,000 boys and girls in our Kindergartens, forty-five Primary Schools and fourteen Secondary Colleges. 9,540 children attend our Primary Schools and 9,861 are in our Secondary Colleges and three Specialist Settings.

Always mindful of the purpose of the Catholic school, Catholic Education Sandhurst exists to support schools in providing the best in educational opportunities and outcomes for the students entrusted to our schools. In our



Bishop Shane Mackinlay cuts the 200-year anniversary cake with former Directors of Catholic Education, Adrian Sexton, and Denis Higgins; and current Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd, Paul Desmond.

work, we seek courageous renewal and the promotion of the human person through the provision of stewardship and leadership that are credible, contemporary, accountable, sustainable and transparent.

We believe that education is much more than a profession. It is a vocation, one that is based upon a service model, where all persons are valued and empowered to be their best. It is our goal to support Sandhurst schools as they nurture young lives and develop within each student a sense of faith, purpose and hope. Throughout 2021, we have worked to be faithful to a model based on the guiding principles of Mission, Stewardship, Dialogue, Subsidiarity and Co-responsibility. As Catholic educators, this focus serves to remind us on a daily basis that our ministry within the Faith must always be robust, hope-filled, service-oriented, ready to challenge, to uplift, to enhance and to improve. We seek to hold Christ at the heart of our work, to be faithful to the core business of learning and teaching, and to be enlivened by the teachings of the Catholic Faith.

We in Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd remain very grateful to:

- both the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments for their generous financial support of the Catholic Sector;
- Bishop Shane Mackinlay for his strong leadership;
- Episcopal Vicar for Education, Fr Brian Boyle, for his ongoing positive presence;
- all Sandhurst Clergy for the critical role each has played in the spirit, life and culture of our schools;
- CES Ltd Board and SCECE&C Ltd Board and Committees for their deep commitment to our schools. Particular thanks are offered to Board Chairs, Mrs Patricia Cowling and Mrs Julie Cobbledick for their expert guidance as we ventured into this new model of governance.

Pope Francis' call to Catholic educators to strive for the fullness of humanity is woven into our Vision. Our Catholicity and our relationship with God remain central to our work. In 2021, we adopted as our theme for the year Faith in Our Future – a simple but clear acknowledgement that we are a people of hope, and we look to the future with confidence, knowing God wants us to be preparing for tomorrow, always learning, open to new ideas and new possibilities, filled with promise.

To the future – excellence in learning, equity in educational opportunities for all and a deep knowledge and love of the Faith are what we will strive to provide for every student.

Mr Paul Desmond

Executive Director
Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd

CatholicCare Victoria

On 1 January 2021 we celebrated the coming together of CatholicCare Sandhurst, Centacare Ballarat and CatholicCare Melbourne/Gippsland to create CatholicCare Victoria (CCV); the culmination of many months of careful collaboration and due diligence. This heralded a momentous strategic alignment of the social service agencies of the four Catholic Dioceses in Victoria; an amalgamation that will help advance the ministry of Catholic charitable and social services across the state.

CatholicCare Victoria was inaugurated in a Commissioning Mass on 24 March 2021, blessing the organisation and entrusting staff and partners with CatholicCare Victoria's mission to strengthen families and communities. Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli of Melbourne was principal celebrant of CatholicCare Victoria's opening Mass at St Anthony of Padua Parish, South Melton, which was concelebrated by Bishop Paul Bird CSsR of Ballarat, Bishop Shane Mackinlay of Sandhurst, Bishop Greg Bennet of Sale and distinguished clergy.

In addition to welcoming CCV's founding Board Chair, John Sheldon and founding CEO, Agnes Sheehan, CCV also welcomed its new Board, including the appointment of John Murphy and Sarah McAdie who live in the Sandhurst Diocese and have been members of the CatholicCare Sandhurst Board. CCV's Board meetings rotate across the state. In 2021, meetings were held in Shepparton, Warragul and East Melbourne but due to COVID lockdowns two of our Board meetings were held via Zoom, with local staff presenting to the Board on their programs.

As well as the welcomes, 2021 has also seen us farewell some dear friends. Rhonda Lawson-Street (Executive Director, CatholicCare Sandhurst) retired on November 5, 2021. We will be forever grateful for her significant contribution to the development and delivery of programs offered by CatholicCare, her passion for supporting local community and her leadership supporting the change associated with coming together.

New Organisational Structure and Integration Program

One year has passed and we have been very busy – running a comprehensive integration program to bring the three agencies together – on top of our Mission as usual service delivery commitments – and in the midst of a pandemic! In July we presented the proposed new organisation structure to our Board who gave us the green light to take the proposal to staff for consultation. After extensive consultation with our people, a final organisational structure has been implemented that will position CCV well for the future. We have transitioned to functionally aligned streams and service delivery models that prioritise partnering and enablement.

Clients remain central to all that we do!

Regardless of the complex transformation projects underway to integrate our systems, clients remain at the heart of all that we do and core to our Mission to care for, uphold and honour the inherent dignity of every person. CCV is a leading provider of child, family and youth services, family relationship services, school

counselling and pastoral care services, refugee services, social housing, employment and advocacy services.

In 2021, CatholicCare Victoria supported over 27,000 people across more than 60 programs, 25+ locations delivered from offices – or via outreach – across Victoria. We employ 500 staff and work with many volunteers.

Ensuring our client and community programs meet needs in the local communities of the Sandhurst Diocese

In 2021 CatholicCare Victoria's 63 'Sandhurst region' staff, supported:

- **2,156 Sandhurst clients** plus additional clients across Integrated Family Services, Parents Next and Youth Justice who were not captured in the above data. An additional 925 children were supported in four Primary Schools: Epsom, California Gully, Heathcote and Quarry Hill.
- Of the Sandhurst Diocese clients captured in our Penelope database:
 - 87.8% were adults and 12.2% were children
 - 7% identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
 - 12% of clients have a disability
 - 2% come from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

National Schools Chaplaincy Program – Sandhurst Diocese

Chaplains supported the school communities in the Sandhurst Diocese mentioned above with the challenges of lockdowns and home schooling. As well as COVID related lockdown support, chaplains have been assisting children transitioning to/from out of home care, distributing food relief boxes and providing referrals for students, families and staff to additional services as needed. Demand from school staff seeking individual debrief/support was also high in the schools, highlighting the trust built by the Chaplain with staff. Chaplains not only work with individual children but offer group sessions during lunchtime and class time such as Friendship Groups, Art Groups, Stormbirds and Seasons for Growth.

Communities for Children (CfC)– Shepparton

The Communities for Children Facilitating Partners (CfCFPs) is a place-based model of investment supporting children and families in 52 disadvantaged communities across Australia. CatholicCare Victoria is the facilitating partner in Shepparton to facilitate a whole-of-community approach to support early childhood development and wellbeing with a focus on children from birth to 12 years and can include children up to 18 years and their families. Some 2021 achievements include:

- Shepparton CfC renewed funding agreement for five years (until June 2026) which is extremely pleasing, given annual renewals recently, and commenced implementing Collective Impact principles to our way of working.
- Over \$700k was distributed to community partner organisations to fund aligned activities with additional funding to our highly successful Professional Practice Seminar Series.

Supporting our people throughout the Shepparton COVID-19 Outbreak

COVID has been difficult for everyone, and the community services sector is no exception. During the COVID-19 outbreak in Shepparton, 20,000 community members (one third of the town) went into isolation, including six CCV staff. In support of our isolating staff and their families, Bendigo-based Managers worked with a local café and organised care packages to be delivered to the homes of staff to support their wellbeing.

Other CCV achievements in 2021

We conducted a client survey which confirmed that, despite having the most lockdowns in Australia, nearly 93% of respondents said our service was accessible, nearly 90% said they felt listened to, and 87% would recommend our service to others.

We launched several new initiatives, including:

- A new CCV website and social media platforms.
- **Homeless to a Home** consortium with Uniting VicTas to assist homeless people, who were provided hotel accommodation during the pandemic, to transition to safe and secure housing. This program operates in Victoria's South West and Central Highlands and is delivered in collaboration with Centacare Housing Services who provide tenancy management.
- Through subcontract funding from Foundation House, we will provide trauma and torture counselling to people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds in Mildura to improve their mental health outcomes.
- We have partnered with Cabrini Outreach to pilot a program to help refugees and asylum seekers in Mildura to navigate the mental health system and access psycho-social supports.
- With philanthropic support from Give Where you Live and Geelong Community Foundation, we have expanded our **Geelong Settle Well program**, providing internships to enhance employment opportunities for refugee youth.
- We commenced a pilot program to provide pastoral supervision to newly ordained priests across the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

With our new State-wide footprint, we were successful in several tenders, including:

- **Residential Care:** which will see us providing an additional three homes for children and young people in Out-of-Home Care;
- We received \$1.36 million of additional funding for **Emergency Relief** (across Victoria and Tasmania) and a further \$168,000 (for Melbourne) to meet the growing demand for support;
- **a partnership with Villa Maria Catholic Homes** for additional carer respite funding; and

- **Social Housing** – Building Thriving Communities as part of the government's **Big Housing Build**.

CCV is committed to developing healthy and flourishing local communities. Part of this commitment includes identifying and addressing barriers that prevent our communities from thriving. We know from the evidence, client voices and our staff, that a barrier which often inhibits our clients from accessing the support they need to thrive is **a lack of affordable housing**. Without the safety and stability of a place to call home, it is difficult to address issues around mental and physical health, unemployment, family violence, addiction, and entrenched disadvantage and poverty, and gradually move towards greater independence and self-reliance. As a state-wide organisation, CCV has the capacity to offer good quality, well-located and affordable housing combined with appropriate wrap-around services and community integration.

- **In 2021, \$32.5 million was awarded to Centacare Housing Services (CHS), a subsidiary of CatholicCare Victoria**, as part of the government's Big Housing Build. The funding enables the development of 148 new properties across eight sites by the end of 2023.

The expansion of our social housing services will build a foundation for our services across the organisation to work together to create thriving communities.

- Through CHS, CCV is committed to becoming a state-wide community partner with the Victorian Government to deliver their 10-year Social Housing Plan with a focus on Regional Victoria. The Catholic Church has a long tradition of supporting social services through collaborative partnerships, and we are working with a number of parishes across the state to evaluate the suitability of land for social housings.

What are the priorities for CCV going forward?

CCV is currently developing a five-year Strategic Plan and will finalise our strategic direction over coming months. John Sheldon, Chair of CatholicCare Victoria said,

"We are looking to expand our services to meet the unfulfilled demands of our clients and to reach those who we perhaps have not been able to in the past. Whether that be through a stronger geographic reach or greater access to funds to allow us to expand our service offerings – as a larger and stronger organisation – we must use this strength to advocate for those most in need. That is our challenge, and one which I am sure we all accept with hope and enthusiasm."

All in all, that's a lot to celebrate! We thank our staff, volunteers, and supporters for their part in our journey so far – and we look forward to 2022 with hope and optimism that we will continue to make a difference for the communities we serve.

Ms Agnes Sheehan

Chief Executive Officer
CatholicCare Victoria

Safeguarding, Child Protection and the



“The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst is dedicating significant resources to reform, in order to apply best practice to ensure that children and vulnerable people in our Diocese flourish and thrive.”

The Diocese has a universal expectation for the protection of children, and young people. It is resolutely committed to ensuring that all those engaged in the Church promote the inherent dignity of children and young people and their fundamental right to be respected and nurtured in a safe environment. This is particularly so for the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability. We welcome all children and their families, without discrimination based on sexual orientation, intersex status, or gender identity.



Implementation of the Child Safe Standards

In April 2021, the Diocese of Sandhurst became the fifth Australian Catholic diocese to complete a safeguarding audit against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst embraced the necessity of compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards, following government recommendations to comply with the standards, effective from 1 January 2017. Changes, which come into effect from 1 July 2022, are being implemented to the Victorian Child Safe Standards; the new standards set out minimum requirements and outline the actions organisations must take to keep children and young people safe.

The new standards provide more clarity and are more consistent with Standards in the rest of Australia, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee will compare what the Diocese currently has in place under the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, (which are also aligned with National Principles for Child Safe Organisations) and the new Victorian Child Safe Standards, to ensure we comply with the standards effective from 1 July 2022. The focus will be on culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

In June 2019, Catholic Professional Standards Limited (CPSL), an advisory group established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia, finalised the 10 Child Safe National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) and the Diocese continues to comply with these standards.

CPSL has now transitioned into the new national body for safeguarding (an advisory group) and is called Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL), which represents an evolution of safeguarding in the

Church. It is a company limited by guarantee, owned by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia, and the Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons. ACSL has safeguarding responsibilities at a national level and brings together the work of two previous entities, CPSL and the Australian Catholic Centre for Professional Standards (ACCPs). <https://www.acsltd.org.au>

ACSL is in the process of extending the NCSS (edition 2) to include safeguarding requirements for adults at risk. It is hoped that edition 2 will be finalised early in 2022. When finalised, these new safeguarding requirements for adults at risk will be incorporated into diocesan policies and procedures.

ACSL Safeguarding Audit of the Diocese of Sandhurst

The Diocese has been assessed as a “Category One” Church entity for application of the NCSS (working with Children). There are 10 NCSS standards, 49 NCSS Criteria and 111 NCSS indicators that apply to Category One entities. The audit commenced in October 2020 when restrictions on travel and face-to-face meetings were still in place due to the pandemic. As such, the review of documents, assessments of policies and procedures, discussions and interviews with personnel were conducted remotely, using email, photos, video conferencing and other electronic communication methods. Some face-to-face meetings and site visits were conducted from late November 2020 once travel restrictions in Victoria eased.

The audit included detailed safeguarding interviews with the Safeguarding Coordinator of the Diocese, key members of the Chancery office and Youth Ministry. The audit also included detailed safeguarding interviews and review of documentation for a sample of nine parishes chosen randomly across the Diocese.

The audit concluded in April 2021 and the overall findings of the audit was that the Diocese has fully implemented or has substantially progressed in the implementation of 96% of the indicators which are relevant to our operations. A further four indicators were in the initial stages of implementation. ACSL has provided 12 recommendations; there are no Priority 1 recommendations, 5 medium-rated and 7 low-rated recommendations*.

The Safeguarding Coordinator of the Diocese provided parishes with the audit report and information regarding the recommendations. The majority of the recommendations have been implemented within the timeframe provided and communicated to parishes via email.

To further strengthen the consistency of practices across the Diocese and improve networking between parishes, we held three Zoom meetings inviting parishes to come together and discuss the recommendations. These sessions were well received with many parishes taking part. Further Zoom meetings will take place in 2022 after the remainder of the recommendations have been completed.

Clergy and Parish Child Safety Officers/Team members have been overwhelmingly positive in their leadership in child protection activities, such as at the in-service for clergy, which is attended by all parish priests, and attendance at the Zoom meetings.

The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst is dedicating significant resources to reform in order to apply best practice to ensure that children and vulnerable people in our Diocese flourish and thrive.

* For full details of the NCSS audit refer to <https://www.acsltd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/diocese-of-sandhurst-final-audit-report.pdf>

Ms Anne McIntosh
Safeguarding Coordinator
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst



Clergy Life and Ministry

“There have been several significant and positive developments in the life and ministry of Sandhurst priests ...”

Similar to the situation last year, the ongoing pandemic has continued to significantly impact the liturgical, social and pastoral activities of our parishes. Our priests have again been challenged to respond to pastoral needs in creative ways and to continuously adapt the liturgical life of parishes in the light of government restrictions, often at short notice. At the time of writing, priests and parishioners are familiar enough now with the routines of hand sanitiser, masks and QR check-ins. These are challenging and uncertain times for us all.

At the same time, however, there have been several significant and positive developments in the life and ministry of Sandhurst priests in 2021. During the year, the priests were able to gather together for extended meetings on three occasions; two of these in person and one online. As well, the suite of documents and policies relating to the care and welfare of priests, which had been in development since 2020, were finally presented to the priests for their considered reflection and appraisal. And so, despite the difficulties we have all faced in coping with the pandemic, there is much to celebrate.

In April, the recently ordained priests of our Diocese gathered with Bishop Shane, Fr Joe Taylor and myself in Moama to reflect together on challenges and opportunities in ministry. The in-service sought to recognise the particular needs and aspirations of recently ordained priests and to support them in their ministry. A draft diocesan policy for the support of recently ordained priests was presented for discussion. Other topics included: the spiritual and ministerial life of the priest in a rural diocese; mentoring, supervision and spiritual direction; and, the priest as evangeliser. The relaxed atmosphere on the Murray River also allowed time for socialising. The Diocese is committed to the care and welfare of its priests and, within that cohort, particular groups such as the recently ordained.

The second meeting of priests in 2021 was intended to be our retreat at Corpus Christi College, as a physical gathering, in June. However, the ongoing pandemic changed all that, as it has changed so many aspects of our lives! The retreat was switched to online mode. Priests adapted readily to this new form and followed the talks enthusiastically. The Retreat Director was Fr Mark Freeman PP (Launceston). The theme of the retreat was: ‘Our relationship with Christ as Priest’. Mark drew on the wealth of his pastoral experience and good humour to lead our priests in their prayerful reflection. It was good to see how smoothly the process worked.

Up to this point in our year the priests had experienced one physical gathering and one online gathering. It was certainly a nerve-racking experience at times to make decisions about the location and mode of gatherings, consistent with the safety of participants and government health directives! The third gathering was the annual Clergy In-service, held in August at the Gateway Motel,

Wangaratta. Border closures meant we were unable to gather at Moama as originally planned. The Sandhurst priests took over some 40+ rooms of the motel, as well as dedicated meeting and dining rooms. The focus of the in-service was careful appraisal of, and reflection on, a number of key policies being prepared in draft form on the care and welfare of priests. It was gratifying to see the consistent involvement of the priests with this documentation over several days. Gathering together at a motel also allowed for many occasions to celebrate our fraternal spirit.

As already indicated, the Diocese has been engaged over the last 18 months with developing a suite of policies on the welfare and care of the priests. This care on the part of the Diocese needs to be intentional, focused, and comprehensive. The policies and their implementation are some of the principal ways of ensuring this care takes place. The documentation includes policy on the care and formation of priests; program for the welcome, support and acculturation of overseas Priests working in the Diocese; policy for the support of recently ordained priests; ministry appraisal and review forms; and policy on clergy remuneration and support. Following consideration at the Priests’ In-service, this documentation is now approaching final form and approval.

There were several other occasions for celebration by Sandhurst priests throughout 2021. On March 30, during Holy Week, we gathered as a presbyterate at the Cathedral in Bendigo for the celebration of the Chrism Mass at which the oils used for sacraments each year are blessed. On December 14 we gathered to celebrate the jubilee of ordination of three of our priests: Mgr Frank Hickey (70 years), Fr Rom Hayes (50 years), and Fr Junjun Amaya (10 years). These gatherings are always an opportunity to celebrate our ministry as priests in a fraternal spirit. As well, we celebrated the lives and ministries of three of our priests who died during 2021: Fr Frank Hart, Fr John Ware and Fr Paul Purcell, each of whom made a very fine contribution to the life of the Diocese, and cumulatively, represented many years of priestly service to our people.

As with all aspects of life there are endings and there are beginnings. We gathered in the Cathedral on 10 July for the ordination to the priesthood of Adi Indra, a very joyful occasion. In the uncertainties of the pandemic, a window of opportunity emerged for the ordination to proceed. Fr Adi is currently concluding studies in Canon Law in Rome.

In January 2022 two priests, Fr Uday Kumar Marneni and Fr Jophin Joy, will be arriving from India to commence parish ministry in our Diocese and the already rich cultural diversity of our Sandhurst presbyterate will be further enhanced.

Very Rev. Fr Brian Boyle PhD
Director, Clergy Life and Ministry
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst



Troy Firebrace performs a Smoking Ceremony, welcoming priests of the Diocese to Yorta Yorta Country, at the Priests' In-service in Wangaratta.

Jubilarians



Monsignor Frank Hickey

When I matriculated from St Patrick's College in 1943 there were six of us who entered the seminary. In 1951, I was ordained a priest with 17 fellow men, and now, at 95, I'm the last man standing.

Taking the sacraments for the first time made a big impression. I met the Lord in that ceremony. It was the most faith-filled experience of my life. It introduced me to the idea of the priesthood. Since then, I had seen myself in a priestly role, though in a distant hazy way. I grew up on a farm near Numurkah in the depression years, one of eight children. I didn't go to Catholic schools, other than three weeks at St Joseph's Numurkah when I prepared for my First Holy Communion, and I always felt like an outsider. This feeling lingered when I started my last two years of high school at St Patrick's College, Ballarat and even at Corpus Christi College, Werribee.

Even though I wanted to become a priest, I didn't think I'd have much chance of succeeding because I didn't have any Latin and I was a smoker. But, thanks to God, all obstacles disappeared and I was ordained a priest after eight years in the seminary.

Over 70 years I've seen a lot of change in the Church. Vatican II was tremendous; I agreed with everything. Now, just the fact that we are taking synodality on board is a great advance. It's taking our brothers and sisters in Christ into real communication with one another, and with Christ. I've been praying the Plenary prayer and the Synod on Synodality Prayer every day. They are beautiful prayers, both of them. Pope Francis is saying we don't have to shut doors on what is going on; Christ is everywhere, so let's find Him and be with Him.

I think the most important thing for all Christians, and especially for priests, comes from St Paul, *"For in Him we live and move and have our being."* (Acts 17:28).

I think prayer at home and prayer in groups is a reflection of Christ in community.

"For where two or three gather in my name, there I am with them" (Matthew 18:20).

That's what St Paul talked about; it's the most important thing in life for any one of us. We need to celebrate and pray together with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The biggest impact on Catholic families I've seen in my time is the TV and internet. They have lessened our sense of "my sister my brother". The other person is not the point of interest, but the thing on the wall, or the thing in the hand. I feel that these devices have caused the lessening of group faith and the lessening of Christ amongst us.

When I was a child, my family prayed the Rosary every night. As kids we might have been half asleep, but the point is that Christ was there, he affected us through that group. TV Mass has been great through the pandemic, but after the pandemic, we need to make sure that we continue to gather together, around the breaking of bread, if possible, but at the very least in prayer. Then we will find Christ amongst us.

I really hope and pray that the youth of today, will see themselves the way youth once did, as children of their ancestors. We need our youth to understand that we have a story; we are people of culture and we have to have that culture which we inherit as Christians influence our Australian culture. We are all children of the Spirit.

I see so many possibilities for the future in many of the good people of Nagambie, who practise the Gospel truths at the social and devotional level. This gives me hope and great joy.

"For in Him we live and move and have our being."

(Acts 17:28)



Fr Rom Hayes

I always knew I wanted to become a priest, right from the word go; I felt it was what I would be happiest doing and what God wanted me to do. I grew up in a family with very spiritual parents who had a great attachment to the Church, and there were always priests visiting our house – my father took them fishing – they were so full of joy, just great fun. There were many family members who were priests, including my namesake, my father's brother Rom. So, when I joined the seminary, it wasn't something unusual, more natural.

Priesthood has enriched my life in so many ways. The most significant being my experience working in Peru as a missionary with the Columbans for 12 years. Rubbing shoulders with the poor all the time helped me to be grateful for the comfort, beauty, and safety of our country and ever mindful of the conditions people in poverty face every day, wherever they might be. It's the reason why I became Director of Caritas in Sandhurst; I couldn't just work with the poor and then forget about them. For me, people living in poverty express best the face of God. Around that is their simplicity, their warmth, their capacity to laugh; they are filled with the best of humanity.

In the years I've been a priest, my understanding of Church has changed dramatically, and so has the Church. I am much more open to change now than I thought I'd ever be. I never believed I would be so lucky as to live in a Church with a Pope like the present one; he has given me light, and hope and a strong belief in the Church of tomorrow.

I've been blessed with good Bishops throughout my entire time. Our current Bishop has an exceptional vision of Church, and this is a great boost to me and fellow clergy. I've enjoyed working as priest in the Diocese of Sandhurst. You can really get to know people in parishes and there is a genuine sense of fraternity amongst the clergy.



Fr Junjun Amaya

Since his early years of primary school Fr Junjun knew he wanted to be a priest. "Everytime I saw a priest wearing a white vestment and/or blessing people with the Blessed Sacrament ... something deeper in me would fire me," he once wrote.

For Fr Junjun the path to priesthood had many obstacles. Born into a farming family in the Philippines, the sixth of eleven children and the oldest son, Fr Junjun felt responsible for the wellbeing of his family when his father became ill and later died and so left high school to work in various odd jobs. All the while Fr Junjun continued with ministry in his own way, working as a catechist at his local parish and volunteering in parish life. Fr Junjun felt God's work when he passed a placement exam for out-of-school youth, which eventually allowed him admission to diocesan seminaries in Cebu.

On the invitation of Bishop Joe Grech, Fr Junjun completed his formation at Corpus Christi College in Carlton. Since his Ordination in 2011, Fr Junjun has served in the parishes of St Kilian's, Myrtleford, Kennington, Eaglehawk, Kerang, Pyramid Hill, Cohuna and now, Wodonga where he is Parish Priest.

“Thank God ahead of Time”



Rev. Fr Adi Indra Ordained a Priest

Rev. Fr Adi Indra was ordained a priest on Saturday 10 July 2022 at Sacred Heart Cathedral Bendigo. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic Adi's ordination was postponed several times and he possibly became Sandhurst's longest serving transitional deacon. Fr Adi's Mass of Thanksgiving was at St Kilian's Church, Bendigo on Sunday 11 July.

After his ordination Fr Adi spent time serving at St Brendan's Parish, Shepparton before returning to Rome to complete postgraduate studies in Canon Law. He will return to the Diocese in 2023 to serve as a priest.

"After several postponements due to COVID-19 border closures the day of my Ordination finally came. Despite public health restrictions, and the fact that Australia's closed borders meant my parents and several family and friends could not make it, the Ordination Mass was beautifully and prayerfully celebrated."

"In my thanksgiving remarks towards the end of my Ordination Mass, I quoted a Franciscan Capuchin friar who was beatified in 2017, Blessed Solanus Casey, OFM. Cap from the United States who once said: *"Thank God ahead of time."* What a wonderful attitude towards life. What confidence he had in God. I am thanking God ahead of time, for whatever lies ahead for me in my priesthood."

"Ever since I came across that saying of Blessed Solanus, I have tried my best to thank God ahead of time. Amidst the joy and sadness in life; the blessings and challenges, He is and will still be faithful. I entrust my life, and now my ministry as a priest, in His love and mercy."

Rev. Fr Adi Indra

"I thank you, my brother priests and the people of Sandhurst who have made me, and many others, your own."

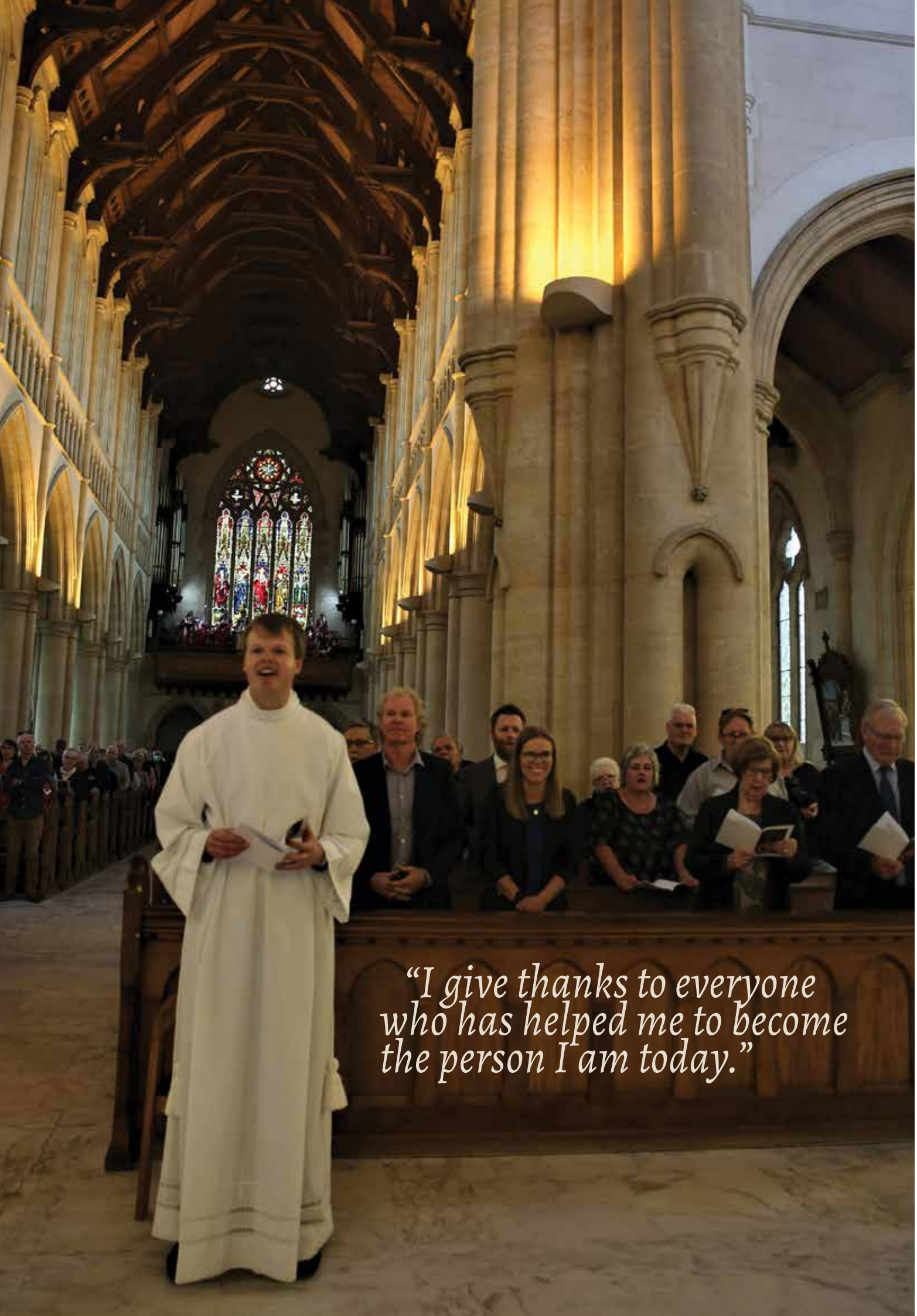
Rev. Fr Adi Indra



"My heart felt so full during the ordination ... To think that you Adi, a young adult who I met at an event in Perth, would later join our Stronger Youth Ministry, and eventually end up in the seminary; are now a priest."

"My mind is still blown at the thought of what God has done in and through your life. I know that God will continue to bless you and use you in ways you never even thought possible."

Rev. Fr Rob Galea



*"I give thanks to everyone
who has helped me to become
the person I am today."*

Rev. Deacon Jackson Saunders

Rev. Jackson Saunders started working for Sandhurst Youth Ministry in 2012. He was accepted as a seminarian by Bishop Emeritus Leslie Tomlinson, and was ordained a deacon by Bishop Shane Mackinlay at Sacred Heart Cathedral Bendigo on Friday 19 November, 2021.

Ordination as a deacon marks the beginning of a life of ordained ministry within the Diocese of Sandhurst and is a major step in the journey to priesthood. Jackson is serving as a deacon in Echuca Parish and will be ordained a Priest of the Diocese in early 2022.

"The Ordination ceremony was a moving experience, especially during the Litany of the Saints when I lay prostrate on the Cathedral floor in between the altar of God and the people of God. This was a moment of great peace, joy and consolation in my vocation."

"I am grateful to all who attended the ordination and for everyone who has been praying for me."

Jackson Saunders



"While I have received the Sacrament of Orders, I continue to be united with each of you through our common baptism."

"Each of us is called to show the love of God to others in our lives, in the way we give ourselves to others, in our relationships and vocations."

Jackson Saunders



Jackson was vested by long-term friends and mentors, Monsignor Frank Marriott and Monsignor Peter Jeffrey.



“We sincerely thank the members of the diocesan community for their wonderful support and prayers throughout 2021.”

From the Seminary

This year we adapted as best as possible to the challenges posed by the second year of the pandemic and were fortunate to be able to complete Semester 1 of studies face-to-face, prior to the return of online learning for the remainder of the year. With many of the seminarians having family and friends overseas, we prayed regularly for each other and all of those grappling seriously with the ongoing effects of the pandemic in Australia and beyond.

Towards the end of 2021, a large cohort of senior students, including Jackson Saunders from our Diocese, were ordained to the priesthood and diaconate, and have moved from the seminary community into fulltime parish ministry. It was a great moment for the College to farewell members of the community as they begin another chapter of their vocation and continue their formation and service as members of a parish community.

Despite the challenges of the last two years, 2022 and beyond promises to be an exciting time in the life of the Church. As a seminary community we are conscious of the ongoing work of the Australian Plenary Council and its call to listen and discern, and the significance of this time in the history of the Australian Church. Globally, too, we look forward to preparing to celebrate the 2023 Synod and the invitation to continually take up the challenge to celebrate the mission of the church in a collaborative and participatory way.

Once more, we sincerely thank the members of the diocesan community for their wonderful support and prayers throughout 2021. We look forward to being able to welcome you to visit the seminary again in the future when travel and gathering are easier.

Rev. Dr Jake Mudge

Coordinator of Seminarians
Liaison with Corpus Christi College
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst



Sandhurst Seminarians, Dominic Manatad, Ezekiel Hangan and Adonis Peña with Bishop Shane Mackinlay after the Ordination of Rev. Adi Indra

Seminarians



Ezekiel Hangan

Fourth Year

Ezekiel began his placement at St Kilian's in July.

"2021, like 2020 was a year of highlights and low lights, of challenges and gratuitous graces. But above all an extraordinary lesson in poverty of spirit. Of depending on the providence of God that His hand is in all things. One valuable lesson the seminary life never tires of teaching is that God calls you in adversity, so that you can grow from the embrace of and response to challenges that life throws at you."



Adonis Peña

Fourth Year

Adonis spent the first semester at the Seminary in Carlton.

In July he commenced a 12-month placement at St Brendan's, Shepparton. He was instituted as an Acolyte by Bishop Shane at St Brendan's Church in September.

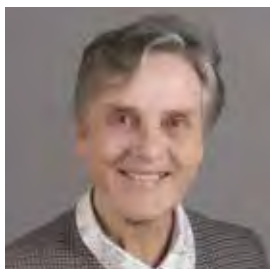


Dominic Manatad

Fourth Year

Dominic spent both semesters at Corpus Christi College continuing his studies in philosophy, scripture and theology. His special interest in sacred music developed further as he continued to sing with the Seminary Schola and also joined the Cathedral Choir at the ordinations of Fr Adi Indra and Deacon Jackson Saunders. Dominic spent his summer break assisting diocesan archivist Dr Donna Bailey at the Chancery in Bendigo.

Adult Faith Education Sandhurst



***"When we are dreaming alone it is only a dream.
When we are dreaming with others, it is the beginning of reality."***

Brazilian Archbishop, Dom Helder Camara

In the Sandhurst Diocese, we are going forward in times of challenge and new opportunities, dreaming together and planting seeds for a vibrant future. The Australian Catholic Church's Plenary Council; the international Synod on 'Synodality'; the Laudato Si' Action Platform and Catholic Earthcare, which is now part of Caritas Australia; have all resulted from dreams and now, in turn, they are calling us to dream and to implement the decisions we make that are based on attentive listening and prayerful discernment.

A primary purpose of Adult Faith Education is to assist individuals and communities in our Diocese to dream for the future and live life to the full. Listening, learning, sharing and praying are fundamental to this task. We are blessed to have so many committed people in parishes across the Diocese who understand our shared mission and are willing to listen, learn, and pray with their parish communities.

Adult Faith Education Sandhurst builds on Teamwork and collaboration with diocesan networks and parish ministries, including our Priests, Pastoral Associates and Lay Coordinators, Parish RCIA Liturgy and Care for Creation Teams to name a few. Despite the challenges of the global pandemic, ministries have continued behind the scenes in parishes to help people stay connected, caring for each other.

On the first Sunday of Lent 2021, thirteen Catechumens and five Candidates, with their Godparents and Sponsors, **celebrated the Rite of Election** with Bishop Shane Mackinlay at Sacred Heart Cathedral. Families and members of parish **Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults** (RCIA) Teams represented the parishes of St Kilian's, Bendigo; St Liborius', Eaglehawk, St Mary's, Heathcote and St Brendan's, Shepparton.



In March the group gathered for an **RCIA Reflection Day**, led by Br Mark Needham FMS and Anthony Kilmartin, to reflect deeply on the journey they were undertaking.



Members of the **Adult Faith Education Reference Group** have continued to work on Sandhurst 'Liturgy of the Word with Communion' and 'Communion to the Sick', documents which will be developed further to assist parishes in the future.

In 2021 the **Sandhurst 'Care for Creation' Team** continued its outreach, from the Adult Faith Education Reference Group, to support parishes of the Sandhurst Diocese to celebrate the Season of Creation 2021 and to implement our diocesan commitment to 'Care for Our Common Home.'

Six years after Pope Francis' encyclical, Laudato Si', the movement to care for creation, 'our common home,' has gained momentum. In unprecedented ways it draws together our understanding and lived experience of faith, spirituality, and commitment to social justice.

In 2020 the **Sandhurst 'Care for Creation' statement** was launched. In 2021, Adult Faith Education Sandhurst, in collaboration with Sandhurst Caritas Justice and Catholic Education Sandhurst representatives, continued to offer online workshops, prayer, reflection and resources to support parishes, organisations, families and individuals in their efforts to care for our common home.

“What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? ... When we ask ourselves what kind of world we want to leave behind, we think in the first place of its general direction, its meaning and its values ...

We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity ... the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn.”

Pope Francis,
“On Care for Our Common Home”, *Laudato Si’* 160

The Sandhurst ‘Care for Creation’ Network is growing, because ‘care for our common home’ is one of our key responsibilities towards future generations, as well as being integral to *‘the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn.’* (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’* 160).

‘Wheel of Prayer’ Day workshops with experienced local leaders were designed to help other parishes set up their own ‘Men’s Groups’, ‘God in the Bits and Pieces – ‘Women’s Groups’, ‘Charismatic Prayer’ and ‘Faith Circles’.

With the welcome arrival of Dr Chris Cotter, Director of Mission and Pastoral Life (MPL), the ministry of Adult Faith Education Sandhurst joined other diocesan ministries in the **Mission and Pastoral Life Team** under our new Director’s leadership. An important priority for the MPL Team was to provide support for Sandhurst Diocese based Members and Facilitators in the First Assembly of the Fifth Plenary Council of the Australian Church. The MPL Team is looking ahead to diocesan participation in the Plenary Council and Synod of Bishops.

Adult Faith Education involvement in meetings of **Pastoral Associates, Parish Lay Coordinators** and the annual gathering of Priests with Pastoral Associates and Lay Coordinators has continued as all have become adept at using ‘Zoom’. Faith Education resources prepared in 2021 included: Lent and Advent information sets for parishes together with weekly online leaflets for prayer and reflection; ‘Pathways for Families 2022’ and ‘Pathways for Seniors 2022’ published online; prayer and liturgy pages for use by groups and teams.

Social Media outreach, particularly via the Adult Faith Education Facebook and Twitter pages, continues to offer new opportunities to support journeys in Faith Education, Prayer and Spirituality for increasing numbers of people of every age group.

In January 2022, with a grateful heart for the privilege that has been mine for 16 years, I will retire from the ministry of Adult Faith Education Sandhurst.



Lyn Breen with Bishop Emeritus Leslie Tomlinson, after the Jubilarian Mass for Monsignor Frank Hickey and Fr Rom Hayes at St Kilian’s Church, Bendigo.

Ms Lyn Breen

Adult Faith Education Coordinator
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

Sandhurst Youth Ministry

Online ministry and connections needed to continue while we also planned for the possibility of inviting people to gather again. The year saw Sandhurst Youth Ministry cancel events and say goodbye to team member Kristian Joy Tangso, who moved back to Melbourne. However, the year was also filled with so much joy and opportunities for trialing new ideas and directions.

One of the highlights of the year has been the opportunity to collaborate with a group of young adults from different parts of the Diocese to dream up and organise a new event for the Diocese, Sandhurst World Youth Day. This group's openness to dream of new possibilities and work together to bring it to life was lifegiving and inspirational. While we do not know what 2022 will bring, with the passion and faith of the young people connected to SYM, it is bound to be an exciting year ahead.

Stronger Tonight

SYM were thrilled to be able to gather with young people from across the Diocese at their first in-person event since before the pandemic began. Drawing on the pre-pandemic Stronger Rally and the completely livestreamed Stronger Tonight events during 2020, the gathering was run in a hybrid style, allowing for people to gather but also participate from home if that wasn't an option.

A small group of thirty or so gathered outside St Kilian's Church on the Friday night before Palm Sunday. Gen Bryant, a regular guest at SYM events, joined by her band played music both to energise and lead those gathered in prayer. Josh Angrisano shared how he had found Light in his life. Josh's music and beat-poetry inspired all and offered a contemporary example of how he lives out his faith.

There were also young people from Sandhurst featured as part of the evening. Izzy Acquisto and Katie Dixon from Echuca were enthusiastic MCs for the evening, offering guidance and touching on their own personal faith stories as the evening progressed. The Marist College Senior Choir and Catherine McAuley College student Kinh San represented the other two Catholic secondary schools from the Western Deanery by sharing their musical talents.

While a smaller event than what it would have been pre-pandemic, the chance for young people to gather and celebrate their faith with others, both in-person and online, was a much-needed opportunity to reconnect with people and their faith amidst the uncertainty.

"Let there be light."

(Genesis 1:3)



Sandhurst World Youth Day

A team of young people from across the Diocese came together to dream about and create an event that celebrated young people in Sandhurst for a local World Youth Day celebration.

World Youth Day has been celebrated annually by the Catholic Church around the world since 1986. With Pope Francis' announcement at the end of 2020 that he was changing the date from Palm Sunday to the Feast of Christ the King in November, SYM decided that this was the perfect opportunity to begin a new annual tradition to celebrate and connect young people at a local level.

Most people would be more familiar with World Youth Day as the international gathering that takes place approximately every three years. This is still the case, with the next pilgrimage expected to take place in August 2023 in Lisbon, Portugal. A local celebration acts as a connection between the international event and the local parish and Diocese, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to be included.

As with most current events, the celebration was offered both online and in-person. Those who could travel to Bendigo were able to meet other young people, attend workshops and take part in all aspects of the day. Those online were able to join for a youth rally followed by Mass celebrated by Bishop Shane.

Attendees were able to participate in workshops drawing from the theme Stand Up! Presenters included Romina Martiniello from Caritas, Fr Nathan Verallio the Director of Vocations for the Diocese, Bishop Shane Mackinlay and the event planning team. Each workshop aimed to offer young people insights into the many different ways we are called to Stand Up! in our lives, while also offering opportunities for discussion and sharing from the participants.

The livestreamed Youth Rally welcomed back guests Gen Bryant and her band, as well as Josh Angrisano. Fr Rob Galea and his band contributed to the celebration at Fr Rob's home parish of St Kilian's. With music, sharing and a live Q&A opportunity there was plenty of joy filling the Church.

Ms Ruth Lawlor

Coordinator of Youth Ministry
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

*"Stand Up!
I appoint you as witnesses of what you have seen."*

(Acts 26:16)





First Assembly of Fifth Plenary Council Sandhurst Hub

The first General Assembly of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia, took place in hubs and homes across Australia from 3-10 October. 276 Members tackled 16 questions in an endeavour to create a more missionary, Christ-centred Church in Australia. Daily Mass and the first plenary session of each day were live streamed.

Sandhurst Plenary Members, Bishop Shane Mackinlay, Fr Brian Boyle, Cathy Jenkins and Ruth Lawlor gathered at the Chancery each day, while Fr Joe Taylor, due to pandemic restrictions, remained in Shepparton. Locally based Facilitators, Audrey Brown, David Walker and Dr Chris Cotter also joined the Sandhurst Hub. Chancery Staff worked from home for the duration of the First Assembly.

The official Daily Plenary Mass was livestreamed from different dioceses across the country every morning. In Sandhurst, Members and Facilitators gathered each morning for Mass celebrated by Bishop Shane or Fr Boyle and listened to the Homily given at the official Mass via the internet. Mass celebrated by Bishop Shane Mackinlay at St Kilian's Church, Bendigo on 4 October, the Feast of St Francis, was live streamed across the country.

"During this Plenary Council, we too are seeking to rebuild Christ's Church, responding in a very concrete way to Pope Francis' repeated call for us to become a more synodal church: a Church committed to journeying together in reciprocal listening to one another, listening to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, and most importantly listening to the Holy Spirit; a Church which gives witness to the Christian vision of community, participation, solidarity and joint responsibility."

Bishop Shane Mackinlay, in his Homily on 4 October



Fr Brian Boyle celebrating Mass in the foyer of the Chancery, which became the Sandhurst Plenary Hub for the week of the First Assembly.

What is God asking of us in Australia at this time?

Spiritual conversations of the First Assembly covered a broad range of thoughts and topics from, Baptism being the place for fundamental conversion, to the need for the Church to tend to its past and current failures. The process for communal discernment followed the centuries-old practice of “spiritual conversations”.

The themes for National Discernment were developed from the responses to the Listening and Dialogue Phase of the Plenary Council. The voices of over 222,000 people in 17,457 submissions were listened to, and considered.

From the hopes, questions and diverse yearnings of these voices, six themes for discernment and 16 questions were developed and categorised into six themes.



“The Spiritual Conversation Process that we are experiencing is an incredible experience ... it makes us slow down, it provides space ... to stop, to listen to other people, to speak and to reflect on what we are hearing.

I really encourage you to give it a go with your communities.”

Ruth Lawlor, Plenary Member

“One of the concrete proposals we will need to work on is the way in which we can be more aware of the people in the peripheries, who are desperately trying to find their own place, find their voice in the Church; and that, attentive to the voice of the Spirit, we can recognise that and make such people welcome and feel enriched by their presence amongst us.”

Fr Brian Boyle, Plenary Member

“ The role of the assembly facilitator is to assist the group to listen deeply to the voice of the spirit that is present in each member, but also among the members and to assist that bringing forward concrete proposals that will help the church in Australia to truly be the Church that she is called to be – the Missionary Church.”

Dr Chris Cotter, Facilitator



Sandhurst Members and Facilitators attending a morning session of the First Assembly in the Bishop McCarthy Boardroom at the Chancery.

Caritas Project Compassion “Be More”

Be More

The 2021 theme for Project Compassion, ‘Be More’ was inspired by the words of St Oscar Romero: *“Aspire not to have more, but to be more”*. It challenged us to stand in solidarity with people around the world who continue to face the injustice of poverty.

Virtual Immersions

In 2021, parishioners were able to connect directly with Caritas Australia’s overseas Program staff via ‘Virtual Immersions’. These sessions, hosted by Caritas, offered a unique opportunity for parish groups to interact with the people behind Caritas-supported programs and to learn more about the impact of their donations.

These immersions included time for prayer, reflection and dialogue; and provided the opportunity for parishioners to show compassion, not simply through material giving, but through “spiritual giving”.

The **Wangaratta Social Justice Team** organised a Virtual Immersion and invited diocesan Social Justice and Caritas Coordinator, Kerry Stone, to speak at the event. Speaking of the stories conveyed via the Virtual Immersion and of her own experience on immersion in Tanzania, Kerry said, “It’s important to highlight that all these stories are *your* stories – the Australian people. Without your support, there are no stories to tell. Caritas, as an agency, is really just the bridge between the Australian community and the communities in all our stories.”

In 2021 people in the Diocese of Sandhurst raised a total of \$526,000 for Project Compassion.

In an open thank you letter to parishioners across the Diocese, Sandhurst Caritas Director, Fr Rom Hayes wrote,

“2021, has not been an easy year for our people and for our parishes. Although workplaces, jobs and incomes of so many Australians are very tenuous, we have proven ourselves to be a people of amazing generosity. Could it be that the unprecedented sufferings in all corners of our world have softened our hearts and brought us closer to the poorest of our sisters and brothers?” ... The ultimate explanation for such generosity is God’s grace; God’s grace at large in the hearts of you all.”

Fr Rom described Kerry Stone as the “keystone of Caritas Sandhurst” and thanked her for the many hours every day and every week that she gives to the cause.



On Shrove Tuesday, Kerry Stone stands in an empty Hargreaves Mall, where the annual Project Compassion Launch, a casualty of COVID-19 in 2021, would usually have taken place.



Participants at a Project Compassion Virtual Immersion in Wangaratta. Virtual Immersions were launched by Caritas in 2021 as a means to maintain and broaden connections.



St Mary’s Parish Echuca set an amazing example of a community ‘BEING MORE’ with their all-day Caritas Ks event in the centre of town. The Parish community as well as St Mary’s Primary School and St Joseph’s Secondary College all put their compassion into action by walking in solidarity with those who have to travel many kilometres each day for water, firewood, or food for example.



Students at Notre Dame College, Shepparton walking their Caritas Ks.



Students at St Patrick's Primary School, Wangaratta fetch water.



Justice Matters Camp participants outside the old priory at Beechworth.

Justice Matters Camp

'We can be more'

A group of sixty gathered for the Sandhurst Schools Justice Matters Camp; a joint initiative of Catholic Education Sandhurst and Caritas Australia, which took place at Beechworth over three days in early May.

The theme was, 'We Can Be More' and there was an ecological focus throughout the weekend with participants keeping a quote from Cardinal Turkson in their hearts and minds: "the earth is a garden to till and to keep".

Sandhurst Schools' Ethical Leadership Forum



A group of 70 gathered in Shepparton for the Ethical Leadership Forum in May.

On Tuesday 18 May more than 70 senior students from eleven secondary schools in the Sandhurst Diocese came together for a forum on ethical leadership.

The senior students travelled to Shepparton to participate in the event.

Social Justice Sunday 29 August 2021

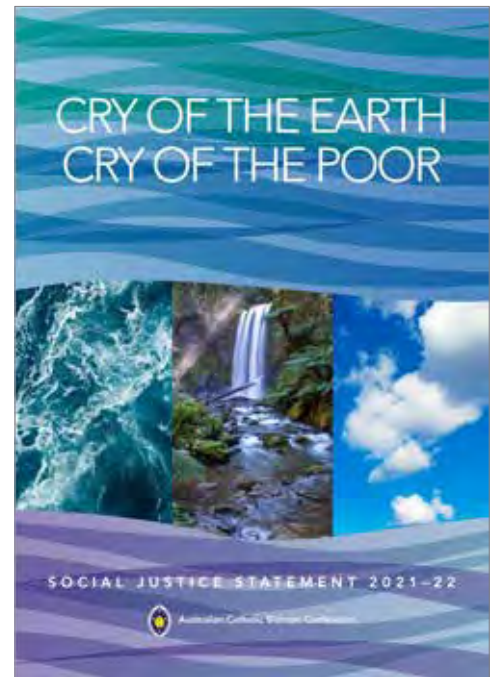
The Bishops invited us to join them in responding to Pope Francis' invitation to take a seven-year journey towards total ecological sustainability guided by the seven Laudato Si' goals.

'Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor'

In 2021, The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference made a commitment to work towards a more sustainable Church in its annual statement promoting social justice. The bishops' Social Justice Statement 2021-22 provided theological foundations to ground and inspire efforts to care for creation while responding to the needs of the disadvantaged and excluded.

In the statement, the bishops invited us to "uncover the sacramentality of creation" in recognising the divine presence in the world, and to respond with wonder and awe. They called for a "profound conversion expressed in a new way of living, both personally and collectively."

"We are being called to a new way of thinking, feeling, understanding and living."



Laudato Si' Action Platform

In May 2020, Pope Francis announced his intent to task Catholics with a commitment to implement *Laudato Si'*; and the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development was charged with developing a framework to support this action. The framework is known as the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform.

On 14 November 2021 the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform was officially launched and, on 21 November 2021, the Diocese of Sandhurst was enrolled as a *Laudato Si'* Diocese; thus committing to work towards the seven *Laudato Si'* Goals over the next seven years.

The *Laudato Si'* Action Platform is a unique collaboration between the Vatican, an international coalition of Catholic organisations, and "all men and women of good will." (*Laudato Si'* 3)

Taking a truly ground-up approach, it is rooted in the strengths and realities of communities around the world, empowering all to take "decisive action, here and now" as we journey towards a better future together. (*Laudato Si'* 161).

7 Laudato Si' Goals



"Standing on the firm ground of "three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour, and with the Earth itself," we commit to setting out "on the long path of renewal," (Laudato Si' 66, 202).

"We embrace our rightful place in the "order and dynamism" that our Creator ordained, and we urgently embark on new ways of living with "creativity and enthusiasm," (Laudato Si' 221, 220).

Catholic Earthcare Parishes

Catholic Earthcare Australia has made it easy for parishes to take up the Bishops' invitation by developing a process to assist them on the journey towards ecological sustainability in the Australian context. Earthcare Parishes are provided with audit and action planning tools and seminars and networking opportunities.

St John's Parish, Numurkah and St Mary's Parish, Echuca were some of the first parishes in Australia to sign up to Earthcare Parishes.

The Chancery has registered as an Earthcare Organisation and is working towards becoming a more ecologically sustainable workplace and landlord.

Early in 2021, Project Manager, Alastair Greenall coordinated a major project to install solar energy systems to many of the buildings owned by the Diocese, including buildings used by the Chancery, Catholic Education Sandhurst, DOXA School, CatholicCare Victoria's Shepparton Office, the Marist Brothers' Residence and Genazzano. Most of these works were completed by the end of 2021.

It is acknowledged that there will need to be ongoing systemic and cultural changes in the Chancery to ensure that, as an organisation, we are working in ways that align more closely to our Catholic values especially integral ecology.

"Our Diocese is committed to signing up to the Laudato Si' Action Platform and we are encouraging all our parishes to become Earthcare parishes to help the Diocese to work towards the 7 goals."

Bishop Shane Mackinlay



Fr Pompeyo Tan and parishioners at St Mary's, Echuca look over Earthcare Parish Audit Documents.



Parishioners at St John's, Numurkah enjoy a cup of fair-trade tea in re-usable mugs at their weekly after-Mass cuppa.

The New COVID-19 Normal



Masks were a requirement at Mass for much of the year, even for a Deacon waiting to be ordained a priest after several postponements over many months.



The Choir at Sacred Heart Cathedral practised 'social' distancing during Mass when singing was again permitted.



The Mass celebrated by Bishop Shane on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on the first day of the Plenary Assemblies was live streamed across the country. The pandemic shaped the way the First Assembly of the Plenary Council was delivered; and no doubt, the way conferences and seminars will be delivered in the future.



Outdoor Masses, like the Mass held at the Knights of the Southern Cross' annual Barney's Picnic Day at Gehrig Estate Wines, near Barnawatha North, no longer seem unusual. Outdoor Masses took place across the Diocese in 2021.

New Josephite Learning Centre at St Liborius' Primary School, Eaglehawk

22 April: St Liborius' Primary School celebrated the official blessing and opening of an extensive refurbishment project which transformed the Senior Learning area of the school. The building was named the 'Josephite Learning Centre,' to link the new facilities for students and their learning with the special charism of the school and its foundation.

Bishop Shane blessed the new facilities, marking the completion of the third stage of the total refurbishment on buildings dating back to 1904 and 1913. The areas have been innovatively designed to cater for modern learning approaches while retaining the charism of St Liborius' Primary School.



200 years of Catholic Education in Australia



24 May: Every diocese in Australia held a Mass to celebrate the bicentenary of Catholic education in Australia.

The Sandhurst Diocese gathered at St Kilian's Catholic Church, the site of the first Catholic school in our Diocese, established in 1853.

The event was live streamed so that all Sandhurst communities were able to join the celebrations. Father Rob Galea and students sang "Faith in the Future," the official song which he wrote for the occasion.

Baptisms at St Patrick's Primary School

24 May: Six students of St Peter's Primary School in Wangaratta were baptised before a congregation of over 300 students, teachers and parents.

The Liturgy was led by Father Nathan Verallo and Father Shibu Pezhumthottathil of the Wangaratta Parish Ministry Team. The occasion was spirit-filled and gave the children an opportunity to share the sacrament of Baptism with their school friends, teachers and families.



MacKillop Art Awards back on exhibit at Cathedral in 2021

12 November: After going online in 2020, the MacKillop Art Exhibition was back in the Cathedral in 2021. Of course, there was also an option to view the exhibition online and even an opportunity to vote for your favourite artwork.

Almost 200 artworks from 30 Catholic schools in the Sandhurst Diocese were included in the 2021 Exhibition.

Event curator and Education Officer for The Arts, Claire Spinelli said that it has been another challenging year for students, teachers and parents. "I am confident that the Sandhurst community will continue to nurture imagination, resourcefulness and originality," she said.



Fun and Games at St Patrick's Pyramid Hill Parish Christmas Party



23 December: Parishioners at St Patrick's Pyramid Hill enjoyed gathering together after a year of pandemic restrictions. Outdoor games and activities added to the fun.

Christmas Mass at St Therese's Kennington full of joy

Christmas Eve: Mass at St Therese's Kennington was joyfully attended by a large gathering in St Therese's Primary School grounds.



Catholic Women's League Shepparton Celebrates 90 Years!



6 April marked 90 years since the inaugural meeting of the Shepparton Branch of Catholic Women's League (CWL).

Finally, on 21 January CWL members from Shepparton and across the state gathered to celebrate the many achievements of the Shepparton CWL.

The generosity and organisational skills of these special women have had a positive impact on their community since the 1930s.

As well as fundraising and charity works, the League offers members companionship and opportunities of shared faith.

Sons and Daughters of God still Call Dookie home.



18 January was a special day for the Community of the Sons and Daughters of God in Dookie.

Bishop Shane presided at Mass at St Mary's Church and formally renewed a 5-year agreement for the Community to continue to use the Dookie Presbytery as their monastery. Their monastery is known as 'St Augustine of Canterbury Monastic House'.

140 years of combined service for Marist Brothers



30 June, Marist Brothers Br Kevin Hoare and Br Xavier Collins were guests of honour at a celebratory lunch at St Kilian's presbytery to commemorate their 70 years of service as professed religious men.

St Mary's Church Mooroopna 85 Years of Dedication



On 23 February, parishioners of St Mary's Mooroopna celebrated 85 years since the dedication of their Church, with a Mass celebrated by Parish Priest Monsignor Peter Jeffrey.

The brick Church as it stands today, was consecrated in 1936 and replaced a timber Church, which was built in 1877.

CatholicCare Victoria inaugurated



24 March: CatholicCare Victoria was inaugurated in a Commissioning, blessing the organisation and entrusting staff and partners with CatholicCare Victoria's mission to strengthen families and communities.

Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli of Melbourne was principal celebrant of CatholicCare Victoria's opening Mass at St Anthony of Padua Parish, South Melton, which was concelebrated by Bishop Paul Bird CSsR of Ballarat, Bishop Shane Mackinlay of Sandhurst, Bishop Greg Bennet of Sale and honoured clergy.

Mason Crosier inducted into the Guild of St Stephen



On Sunday, 6 June, the Feast of Corpus Christi, Bishop Shane inducted Altar Server Mason Crosier into the Guild of St Stephen, at St Mary's Church, Mooroopna.

500th anniversary of the Evangelisation of the Philippines.

The first Holy Mass, to take place in the Philippines was in Limasawa on Easter Sunday in 1521. There was no large gathering in Sandhurst to mark the anniversary due to pandemic restrictions. In parishes across the Diocese, parishioners of Filipino origin, continued to celebrate their unique style of Catholicism; much to the joy of their fellow parishioners who often joined in.

On 14 March 2021, Pope Francis celebrated Mass for the 500th anniversary. His Homily thanking the Filipino people for their evangelisation through their infectious joy, reveals a sentiment parishioners in Sandhurst understand.

“Five hundred years have passed since the Christian message first arrived in the Philippines. You received the joy of the Gospel: ... And this joy is evident in your people. We see it in your eyes, on your faces, in your songs and in your prayers. In the joy with which you bring your faith to other lands ... I want to thank you, then, for the joy you bring to the whole world and to our Christian communities ... your discreet and hard-working presence became a testimony of faith. In the footsteps of Mary and Joseph, for God loves to bring the joy of faith through humble, hidden, courageous and persevering service.”

His Holiness Pope Francis



Some of the Filipino Sandhurst Clergy and Seminarians with Bishop Emeritus Leslie Tomlinson (left) and Bishop Shane Mackinlay (right).



Easter Sunday: Fr Junjun Amaya, Parish Priest of Wodonga, celebrated Dawn Mass by the Hume Weir.



Parishioners at Pyramid Hill after *Simbang Gabi*, a series of Night Masses before Christmas, which have been embraced by many in Sandhurst Parishes. Parish Priest, Novelito Lim and Fr DJ Suguitan are in the centre.



Christmas: Bishop Shane celebrated *Missa de Galla*, one of the dawn Masses leading up to Christmas, at St Brendan's Church, Shepparton on 23 December; and at St Kilian's Church in the early morning of Christmas Eve (above). Then later that day, celebrated Midnight Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Heartfelt Farewell for Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart

The departure of Sr Shirley Gallagher and Sr Lee Davidson from Elmore early this year marked the end of almost a century of service to the Elmore Community by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH). The Sisters have played a crucial role in the provision of Catholic Education and in the broader Elmore region since 1929. More than 30 sisters spent part of their religious vocation in the Elmore community and called the township home.

Although in recent years the sisters have not played a hands-on role at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School, their presence in the community and prayerful support and encouragement of all the children has been highly regarded. The legacy of these remarkable religious women continues to live on in the history of the school and parish, and in the lives they have shaped and influenced over many years.

The Sisters were farewelled at a Commemorative Mass on Tuesday 5 January 2021. A large congregation of parishioners, including past and present students; and OLSH Sisters from across the state, including home-grown Sr Mary Batchelor, and recent Elmore resident Sr Lorraine Ryan, gathered for the Mass which was celebrated by Bishop Shane Mackinlay and concelebrated by Episcopal Vicar Fr Brian Boyle, Parish Priest Fr Ashley Caldow and other priests of the Sandhurst Diocese.



Sr Shirley Gallagher (left) and Sr Lee Davidson, the last Sisters to serve in Elmore, were guests of honour at the Commemorative Mass.



Some of the OLSH Sisters who attended the Commemorative Mass, with Bishop Shane Mackinlay and Elmore Parish Priest, Fr Ashley Caldow. Seated is former student of Sacred Heart Primary School Elmore, the late Sr Mary Batchelor.

A new Chapter for Poor Clare Colettines

After 55 years of prayerful presence in the Diocese of Sandhurst the Poor Clare Colettines have reluctantly left Victoria to join communities in Sydney and Roswell, New Mexico.

On 14 March 2021, Laetare Sunday, people from across the Diocese gathered to farewell the three remaining sisters, Mother Anthony, Sister Christopher and Sister Clare.

Graveside prayers for the five sisters who had gone to God, were followed by Mass and then afternoon tea.

The Farewell Mass was celebrated by Bishop Shane Mackinlay and concelebrated by Bishop Emeritus Leslie Tomlinson and several priests.

Fr Andrew Fewings, who was an altar server at the consecration Mass in 1966, also concelebrated the Farewell Mass.

Eight Poor Clare Colettine Sisters arrived in Victoria in June 1965. They had been invited to establish a community in Sandhurst by Bishop Stewart, who was seeking a community of contemplation and prayer.

The Sisters moved into the purpose-built Monastery of the Holy Ghost in Kennington on 7 December 1966. Bishop Stewart concelebrated the consecration of the chapel, and the blessing and formal enclosure of the Monastery, the following day.



*“... We will always be with you.
As we pray for you,
we ask you to pray for us.”*

Mother Anthony
Abbess
Monastery of the Holy Ghost
Kennington



Sister Clare, Sister Christopher, Mother Anthony and Fr Andrew Fewings at graveside prayers on 14 March 2021.

***“Wherever we go
you are in our hearts
and we ask you to please remember us.”***

Mother Anthony

“The Poor Clares’ prayerful and contemplative presence in our midst is a powerful reminder to us all of the importance of simplicity, reflection and humble listening for God’s spirit.”

Bishop Shane Mackinlay



14 March 2021 at the Farewell Mass, Mother Anthony presented Bishop Shane with an icon of St Clare of Assisi.

“Their offer of prayer, their power of prayer, has brought lots of comfort to people; whether the prayers are answered their way or perhaps in God’s ways, it is nevertheless a testament to their vocation of contemplation, and prayer, and work, that we would like to give praise and thanks to, today.”

Fr Andrew Fewings



17 March 2021 after Benediction, Mother Anthony and Sister Clare leave the Monastery of the Holy Ghost for their new Community in Roswell New Mexico. Sr Christopher departed the day before to join a community in Sydney.

Fr Frank Hart 31 March 1939 – 3 January 2021



"Fr Frank was a striking presence, full of energy and passion, and ripe for the challenges of leading a parish through the positive changes of the second Vatican Council."

Cohuna parishioner

"He loved his priesthood dearly. He wanted to take on the world and became frustrated when positive changes didn't come as quickly as he thought they should."

Fr Des Welladsen

"Frank was good fun; he had an eye for a lonely seminarian and his mischief-making and good humour was part of his charm."

Fr Rom Hayes

Rev. Fr Francis James Hart was a priest of Sandhurst for 52 years. He served in the parishes of Cohuna, Euroa and Wangaratta. His Funeral Mass was held at Sacred Heart Church, Yarrawonga where, in 1959, he was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Sandhurst.

Fr Frank was raised in a loving extended family on a family farm in Boosey near Yarrawonga. Those who knew Fr Hart well, know that it was on the family farm in Boosey, near Yarrawonga, where he felt most in touch with God. It is probably also why Fr Frank didn't mind the nickname "Boosey" given to him by fellow priests when they were seminarians. "Boosey" had only positive connotations for Fr Frank.

Fr Frank and his family were devout Catholics and very much involved in parish life. Fr Frank was an altar boy throughout most of his childhood and as he became a young man, niggling thoughts about the priesthood became stronger. After conversations with his Parish Priest and Bishop Stewart, Fr Frank committed to returning to high school as a mature-aged student. He completed two years of schooling in one, then entered Corpus Christi College, Werribee.

"Frank had a great image of God and what it meant to be loved ... He was aware of that big river of life."

Fr Des Welladsen



Fr John Ware 25 December 1930 – 9 July 2021

Rev. Fr John Harold Ware was a priest of the Diocese for 66 years. His first appointment as Parish Priest was to Corryong in 1972, followed by appointments in Chiltern, Cobram, Wangaratta and finally Rutherglen, where he served until his retirement on 31 December 2014.

The Requiem Mass for Fr John was held at St Mary's Church, Rutherglen. "I've never spent more time in my life anywhere as long as I have in Rutherglen, so the town and this parish hold a special significance to me," Fr John once said.

Fr John was born in Shepparton on Christmas Day. He started his education with the Sisters of Mercy in Shepparton. He was a boarder at St Patrick's College Ballarat for his senior high school years (where he was on the First cricket team and first Football team); then studied at Corpus Christi College, Werribee and Propaganda College, Rome, where he was ordained a priest in 1954.

"John was an avid reader, which gave him a vast vocabulary. His homilies were generally brief and pungent, with interesting references to current affairs or a piece of literature that he was reading."

"He was a Priest 'of' and 'for' the people and very much a pastoral Diocesan Priest whose ministry was in the beautiful North-East deanery."

Monsignor Peter Jeffrey



Fr John Ware spent four years as a seminarian at Propaganda College in Rome. During this time, he never saw his family. In 1954, his parents, and younger brother Gerald, attended his ordination — their journey by boat took three months.

"How I loved to dream of going home. When I was in Rome, I never saw my parents for four years. You never got out, never spoke to them. I had a letter every week. They were different times back then."

Fr John Ware

Fr Paul Purcell 23 March 1927 – 29 August 2021

Born and baptised John Frederick Purcell, Fr Paul was known to many by his religious name, and to his family as Jack.

Fr Paul passed away at the age of 96 in the 41st year of his priesthood, following 30 years of service as a Dominican brother, which included 25 years as Captain of a mission ship in the Solomon Islands. He was awarded an MBE for his service to the people of the Solomons.

He served as Parish Priest in parishes in Sydney, Canberra and Brisbane before joining the Diocese of Sandhurst just before Christmas in 2000. Fellow priest, Fr Rom Hayes, recounts Fr Paul's arrival at Wodonga parish;

"He said five Masses that first weekend. In the 20 years that I've known him, he's never said 'no' to anything."

Fr Paul 'retired' to St Kilian's Parish in Bendigo in 2012, where he continued to celebrate daily Mass until very recently. "A priest never really retires," he would often say. With Fr Junray Rayna, Administrator of St Kilian's, Fr Paul concelebrated daily Mass, which was livestreamed from the St Kilian's Presbytery Chapel. Fr Paul was a great believer that the Church needed to embrace technology and saw the need to do whatever possible to provide opportunities for the Catholic community to pray together at virtual Mass during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.

Born and raised in Yarraville, Fr Paul was an avid Footscray/Bulldogs supporter. He completed an apprenticeship in engineering and boilermaking before joining the Dominicans in 1949. His engineering skills were put to great use when he was tasked with rebuilding a 72 ft ketch, the Salve Regina, which was to become the mission ship he skippered to serve the people of the Solomon Islands.

Fr Paul was known for his quiet self-deprecating humour, dry wit, and gentle demeanour. An amazing cook, he was known for his love of hospitality and his famous celebratory toast "to astonishing good health!" Fr Paul lived an enriched, adventurous and rewarding life in the service of others. In doing so, he inspired and enriched the lives of so many. He will be dearly missed. The Funeral Mass for Fr Paul was celebrated at St Kilian's Church on Friday 3, September 2021.

"Jack had a presence in a room. He loved to sit back and take in everything around him. He was a great listener and always saw the good in others. He had a wonderful sense of humour and loved to laugh."

Clare O'Brien, Niece



"He was a priest who was very faithful to his daily prayers. He had only one app on his iPad, that was the Universalis."

Fr Junray Rayna



Sr Mary Batchelor fdnsc

15 November 1928 – 6 June 2021



Sr Mary Batchelor with Bishop Shane Mackinlay and Principal of Sacred Heart Primary School, Elmore, Liz Trewick.

Sr Mary Leonie Batchelor has left an indelible imprint on the minds of the people in Sandhurst despite never officially working in the Diocese. Raised in Cohuna, during the Great Depression and war years, Sr Mary was the youngest of ten children born into what her parish priest described as a 'generous salt of the earth family.'

Three of Sr Mary's brothers became priests and her sister, Jessie was also an OLSH Sister. Mary was apparently very proud of the contribution each of her siblings made to the Catholic faith, be they ordained, professed or lay.

Sr Mary was educated at St Mary's Primary School, Cohuna, and St Mary's College Bendigo. She also spent some time at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School in Elmore in her early primary school years.

Sr Mary never doubted her calling to religious life and joined her sister Jessie at the OLSH Novitiate at Bowral in 1946, straight after finishing high school. She was professed in 1948.

In 1950, after completing a Diploma of Teaching, Sr Mary started working as a teacher, first in New South Wales, then Victoria and later the Northern Territory.

After over forty years of teaching in Australia, Sr Mary embarked on her next chapter as a missionary and departed for South Africa in 1989. She spent seven years working as a missionary at St Brendan's, Dwars River in the Diocese of Tzaneen during South Africa's apartheid and subsequent election of Nelson Mandela.

In 1995 the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart began a mission in the Diocese of Rumbek in South Sudan, and at age 67 Mary set off to war-torn South Sudan, where she served for 19 years.

Life in South Sudan was challenging. Sr Mary and the other missionaries lived simply in bamboo huts without running water, sanitation or refrigeration. In 1966 Sr Mary, with other missionaries, was held captive by the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Army for 11 days. After this traumatic experience the Order sent Sr Mary home to Australia to recuperate. During her "recuperation", Sr Mary visited schools and parishes across the Diocese of Sandhurst to raise awareness and support for mission projects in South Sudan. She continued to do this for many years whenever she was in Australia.

One of the schools Sr Mary would visit was Sacred Heart Primary School in Elmore. Principal, Liz Trewick described Sr Mary as "awe-inspiring" and the reason behind the school's annual Mission Day which raises funds for the OLSH Missions in South Sudan. Acknowledging Sr Mary's ability to inspire, motivate and influence, the school recently named its staffroom after her.

In January 2021, Sr Mary attended the Mass commemorating the 91 years of service and the enormous contribution of the OLSH sisters in the Elmore Community. At the age of 92, Sr Mary had never known the Diocese of Sandhurst without the OLSH Sisters, and had herself, served as a OLSH sister for over 74 years – a lifetime by anyone's measure.

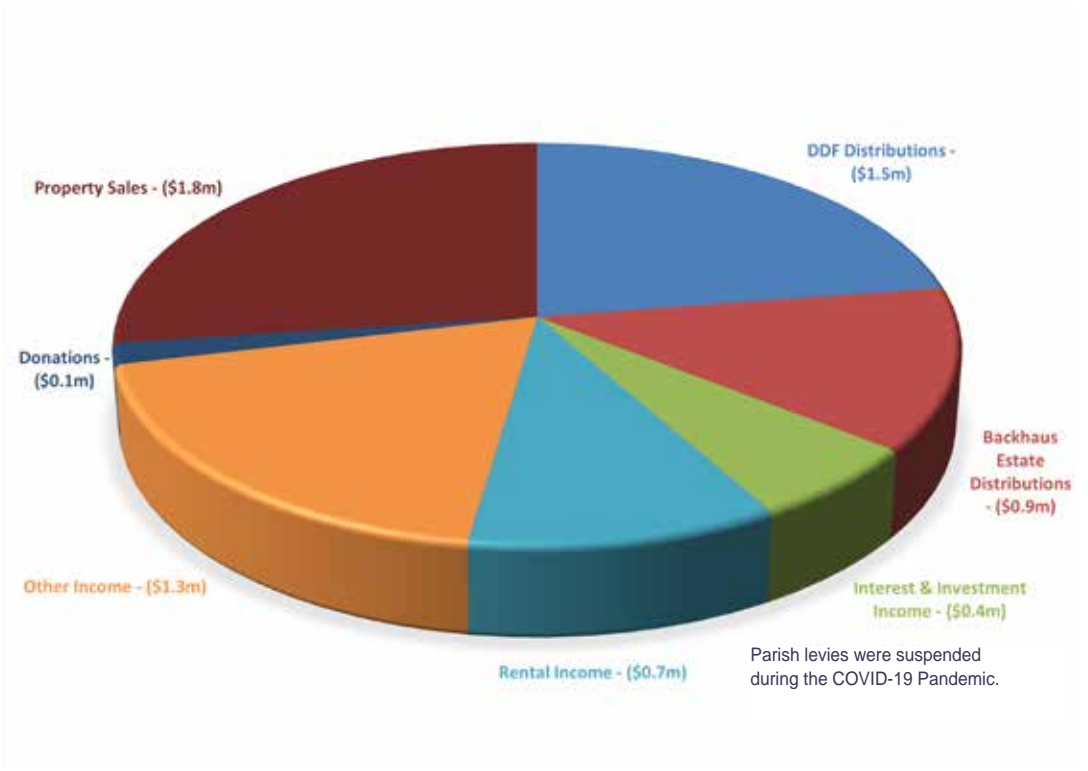
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

Total Income: \$6, 635, 212

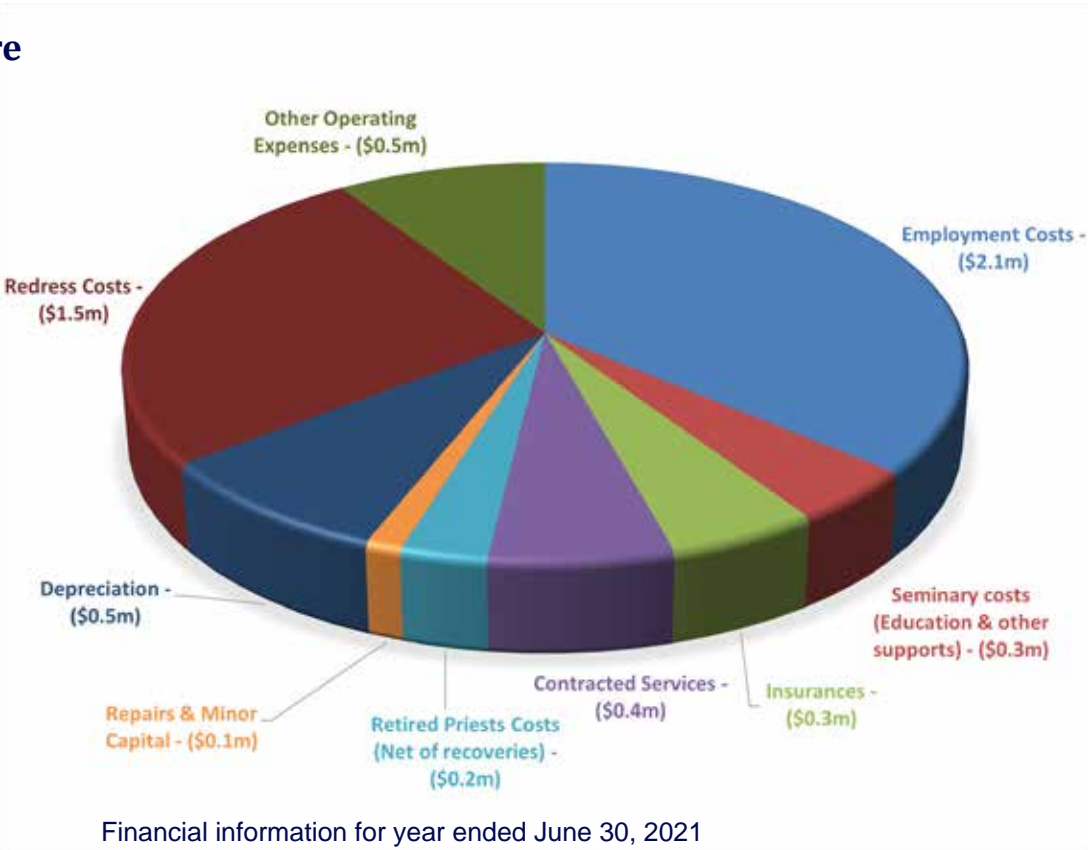
Total Expenditure: \$5, 769, 005

Operating Surplus: \$ 886, 207

CDOS Income



CDOS Expenditure



Financial information for year ended June 30, 2021

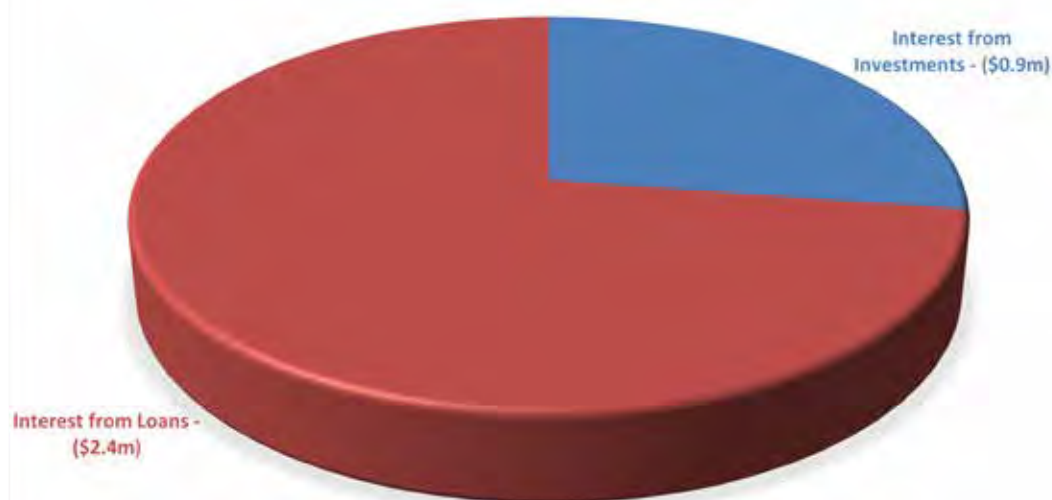
Diocesan Development Fund

Total Income: \$3,290,821

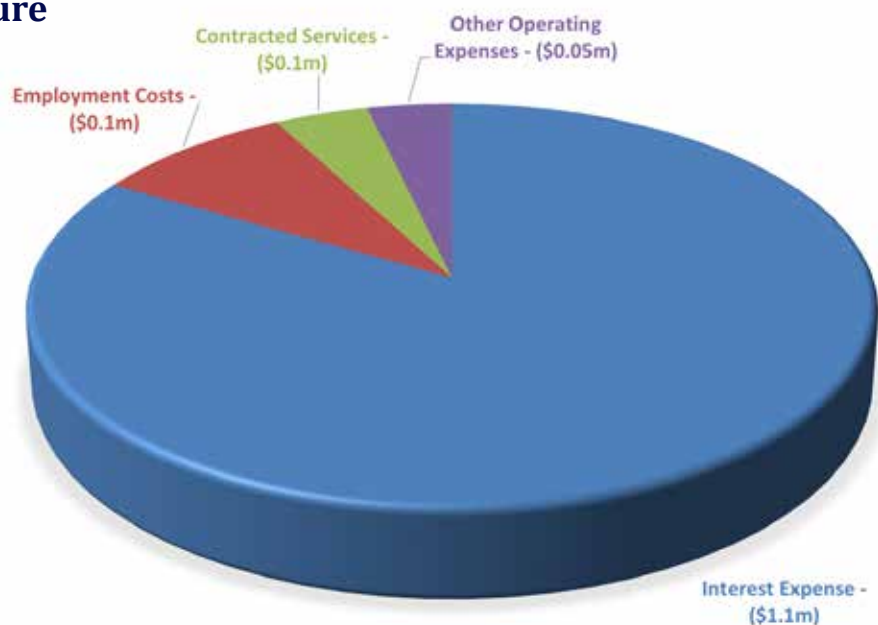
Total Expenditure: \$1,337,827

Operating Surplus: \$1,952,995

DDF Income



DDF Expenditure

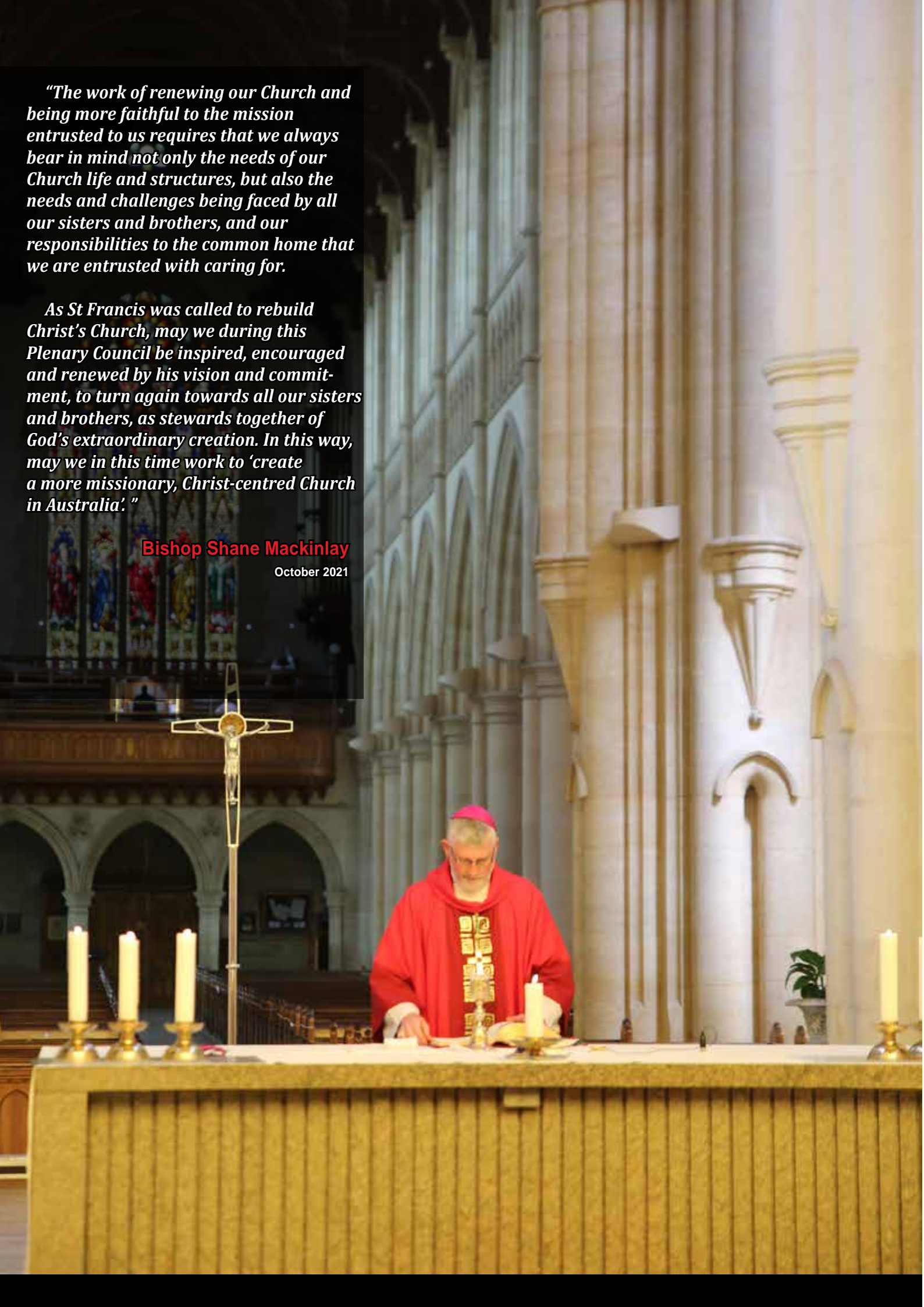


"The work of renewing our Church and being more faithful to the mission entrusted to us requires that we always bear in mind not only the needs of our Church life and structures, but also the needs and challenges being faced by all our sisters and brothers, and our responsibilities to the common home that we are entrusted with caring for."

As St Francis was called to rebuild Christ's Church, may we during this Plenary Council be inspired, encouraged and renewed by his vision and commitment, to turn again towards all our sisters and brothers, as stewards together of God's extraordinary creation. In this way, may we in this time work to 'create a more missionary, Christ-centred Church in Australia'."

Bishop Shane Mackinlay

October 2021





Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst