



December 2017 – March 2018
Pastoral Care Newsletter



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Hello! I hope this newsletter finds you well.

WORDS OF APPRECIATION...

I do this every year, thanking all the wonderful people who are involved in the various pastoral roles within the parish, our ministers and leaders, facilitators, those who support others, carers, people we visit, aged care facility staff and so on. It's important to acknowledge and thank you and others for your time, your gifts and the quiet unobtrusive way in which you minister and care, not for acclaim but to walk the steps of Christ and be of service to others; even during difficult times.

We also acknowledge parishioners, ministers and friends who are now resting in God's loving care who had been part of the pastoral ministry at St Declan's Parish.

Thank you to all the **wonderful parishioners of St Declan's** and those who support and care within this community.

The **visitation ministers** and **bereavement group** who quietly give so much to others. Without your involvement many people would feel isolated from the church and lose their connection to a community of faith. Your presence, support and the offering of prayer gives hope, affirmation and love. This is also evident at our Anointing Masses and Remembrance Mass each year – thank you for your prayers and involvement.

To the **staff and residents of the five nursing homes** who open their doors to us; thank you for giving us the opportunity of sharing the good news and the sacraments of our faith.

A HUGE 'Thank you' to the **Hospital Visiting Group**, who, after 47 years, have hung up their hat. For your enthusiasm, support and connection to the pastoral ministry you gave over the many years, we are forever grateful. Your service was inspiring.

DECLANCRAFT saw six activities held during the last 12 months. Nearly all activities consisted of three or more sessions. *Doodling & Colouring In, Macramé, Crochet, Cards & Games Morning, Handmade Cards and Painting on Canvas* were all so much fun! You could (during those highly intense concentration moments) hear a pin drop. Thanks to those who facilitated these classes especially Ingrid Micallef and Kim Corallo for sharing your incredible skills and talents with us.

Thank you Gail and Brad for four years of service so far doing the **Gardening** in the Church grounds. We welcomed Melissa and Roy who are now assisting Gail and Brad. The grounds look fabulous, keep up the great work!

Thank you to the **Parish Staff** and **Priests** for their continued support, love, friendship, guidance and assistance towards pastoral initiatives and events throughout the year; you enrich pastoral ministry and the life of this parish!

I'd like to thank the **school community** from St Declan's Primary School and Marist College. May God

Fire burning brightly...

Lord, help us to keep the Fire of God's Love burning brightly in our hearts. Through the grace of our Baptism, may we continue share this gift of the Holy Spirit to those we meet, to those who need our care and to those who thirst for spiritual nourishment. Amen.



continue to enrich your leadership, teaching and support roles within the parish community.

A **heartfelt note of thanks** goes to those who, after some discernment, have retired from the various ministries. You have been an incredible source of hope and strength. We wish you God's continuous love and strength. *There are many of you that may wish to move into a different life direction, please contact me if you would like to have a chat. I'm always happy to listen to your story and support you in whatever direction your life goes.*

During 2017 I decided to send out **Pastoral Ministry Support** information that could be of benefit to your ministry involvement but also to you personally. Please feel free to pass this on to anyone you think could also benefit from it. I will endeavour to continue to nourish the pastoral ministries and support you where necessary.

Thank you for your continued support, love and commitment!

WELCOME & THANKS...

From February 2017 saw us with four newly appointed priests of the **Missionaries of God's Love**. These being: Fr Steve Fletcher, who was appointed Administrator prior to Fr Chris Ryan's arrival; Fr Adam Crouch, Fr Isuru Weliwatte and Fr Antony Santhiyagu. Fr Antony was farewelled in August; he continues his vocation in Darwin. We formally welcome Fr Chris during our Christmas season.

We thank all the MGL priests for their support during 2017 and we especially thank Fr Steve for his leadership, guidance and friendship over the past 11 months. We hope that, through God's grace, your future will continue to be filled with God's blessings.

Chris and his fellow priests are open to all ministry and especially service to those who are marginalised, isolated or need a loving hand to support them through the tough times. Chris is inspired as to what St Declan's offers to the community and will support the spiritual nourishment and formation of this community.

2018 DATES

Ash Wednesday

- Wednesday, 14 February 2018

For those who distribute the ashes to Fairlea, Ferndale Gardens, Gannon Gardens, Shangri-La, and Nunyara Nursing homes, and for home visitations on Ash Wednesday, please let me know by **Friday, 9 February**. Ashes, prayers and lists of residents will be provided and ready for **pick-up on Ash Wednesday from 6.45am Mass**

onwards in the sacristy. Thank you for doing these visits, your service is inspiring!

Anointing Mass

- Saturday, 3 March at 10.30am. Followed by a cuppa.

Aged Care/Nursing Home Masses

Ferndale Gardens: 33 Jersey Ave, Mortdale

Shangri-la: 107 Carrington Ave, Hurstville

Fairlea: 11 Hawk St, Penshurst

Gannon Gardens: 53 Gloucester Rd, Hurstville

Nunyara: 8 – 12 Neilson Avenue, Peakhurst

- Dates yet to be confirmed

More dates to follow in upcoming newsletters and correspondence.

PASTORAL CARE RECORDS & SUPPORT

Visitation ministers & bereavement group...

Please contact me if there are changes within your ministry, if your visit situation has changed and if you require information and support.

Pastoral Care Records must be current and therefore continually updated.

The parish is here to support you in your ministry. We thank you for your continued care and participation.

REFLECTION

Always In a Hurry...

Ron Rolheiser OMI, 2 June 2013

Haste is our enemy. It puts us under stress, raises our blood pressure, makes us impatient, renders us more vulnerable to accidents and, most seriously of all, blinds us to the needs of others. Haste is normally not a virtue, irrespective of the goodness of the thing towards which we are hurrying.

In 1970, Princeton University did some research with seminary students to determine whether being committed to helping others in fact made a real difference in a practical situation. They set up this scenario: They would interview a seminarian in an office and, as the interview was ending, ask that seminarian to immediately walk over to a designated classroom across the campus to give a talk. But they always put a tight timeline between when the interview ended and when the seminarian was supposed to appear in the classroom, forcing the seminarian to hurry. On the way to the talk, each seminarian encountered an actor playing a distressed person (akin to the Good Samaritan scene in the gospels). The test was to see whether or not the seminarian would stop and help. What was the result?

One would guess that, being seminarians committed to service, these individuals might be more likely to stop than most other people. But that wasn't the case. Being seminarians seemed to have no effect on their behaviour in this situation. Only one thing did: They were prone to stop and help or to not stop and help mostly on the basis of whether they were in a hurry or not. If they were pressured for time, they didn't stop; if they were not pressured for time, they were more likely to stop.

From this experiment its authors drew several conclusions: First, that morality becomes a luxury as the speed of our daily lives increases; and, second, that because of time pressures we tend not to see a given situation as a moral one. In essence, the

more in a hurry we are, the less likely we are to stop and help someone else in need. Haste and hurry, perhaps more than anything else, prevent us from being good Samaritans.

We know this from our own experience. Our struggle to give proper time to family, prayer, and helping others has mainly to do with time. We're invariably too busy, too pressured, too hurried, too-driven, to stop and help. A writer that I know confesses that when she comes to die what she will regret most about her life is not the times she broke a commandment, but the many times she stepped over her own children on her way to her den to write. Along similar lines, we tend to blame secular ideology for so much of the breakdown of the family in our society today when, in fact, perhaps the biggest strain of all on the family is the pressure that comes from the workplace that has us under constant pressure, forever in a hurry, and daily stepping over our children because of the pressures of work.

I know this all too well, of course, from my own experience. I am forever pressured, forever in a hurry, forever over-extended, and forever stepping over all kinds of things that call for my attention on my way to work. As a priest, I can rationalize this by pointing to the importance of the ministry. Ministry is meant to conscript us beyond our own agenda, but deeper down, I know that much of this is a rationalization. Sometimes too I rationalize my busyness and hurry by taking consolation in the fact that I came to be this way legitimately. It's in my genes. Both my father and my mother exhibited a similar struggle. They were wonderful, moral, and loving parents, but they were often over-extended. Responding to too many demands is a mixed virtue.

It's no accident that virtually all of the classical spiritual writers, writing without the benefit of the Princeton study, warn about the dangers of overwork. Indeed, the dangers of haste and hurry are already written into the very first page of scripture where God invites us to make sure to keep proper Sabbath. When we are in a hurry we see little beyond our own agenda.

The positive side to haste and hurry is that they are, perhaps, the opposite of acedia. The driven-person who is always in a hurry at least isn't constantly struggling to get through the morning to the lunch hour. She always has a purpose. As well, haste and hurry can help make for a productive individual who is affirmed and admired for what he does, even as he is stepping over his own children to get to his workplace. I know this too: I get a lot of affirmation for my work, even as I have to admit that pressure and hurry prevent me much of the time from being a Good Samaritan.

Haste makes waste, so goes the saying. It also makes for a spiritual and a human blindness that can severely limit our compassion.

Visit Ron's website on www.ronrolheiser.com/index.php

PRAYER

Blessings... Throughout 2018, may God continue to bless us within our life, our families and friends, our ministry, our work, our play, our dark moments, our joy, our sorrow, our travels... Amen.

Thank you and take care.

Yours faithfully,

Paulineke

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Pastoral Care... responding to the needs of St Declan's Parish

Pastoral Care aims to provide spiritual nourishment, social interaction and support to parishioners who are bereaved, lonely, aged, infirmed, sick, disabled and are unable to take part in parish Eucharistic celebrations by:

- involving parishioners to minister to others & share their faith
- creating a community of care
- developing a strong parish network.