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My reflections on an inspirational Synod

By Fr Fred

As Dean of the Eastern Deanery, I attended the Archdiocese Synod which met for the last time on Saturday 27 June at the Adelaide Hills Convention Centre in Hahndorf to work on approving the 30 recommendations for the Synod's Final Document.

The Synod commenced as members reflected once again on the Synod scripture theme from the Gospel of John.

"As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you" (John 20:10-23)

It was interesting and inspiring to hear Fr Orm Rush, theologian and priest of the Townsville Diocese, who spoke to the members about listening to the Spirit in the voices of the faithful.

Then a 'voting' process was used like that of the Plenary Council. As each recommendation was read aloud, members held up either a yellow card (I assent to this recommendation) or a blue card (I have strong reservations to this recommendation).

Every recommendation was passed with an

overwhelming majority. Members were invited to write down any reservations to the recommendations which will be considered in the implementation stage.

After the recommendations were accepted, Synod members spent some time discussing which of the recommendations should take priority. This discernment will continue with the establishment of an Implementation Working Group to be overseen by the Diocesan Pastoral Council and Bishop's Council of Priests.

In the afternoon, Archbishop O'Regan shared his final reflections, looking back over the long journey of our Synod, and outlining the steps he will take to discern the outcomes and promulgate decrees and declarations for Archdiocesan legislation.

The Synod concluded with a liturgy in which members were invited forward to take a mosaic tile, mine happened to be orange colour.

Continued on page 2



St Matthew's
Bridgewater



St Joseph's
Lobethal



St Matthew's
Birdwood



Our Lady of the Rosary
Stirling



St Catherine's
Stirling

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My Synod reflections

I didn't know what I had to do with it until we heard someone reciting this prayer and reflected on these words from Henri Nouwen:

A mosaic consists of thousands of little stones. Some are blue, some are green, some are yellow, some are gold. When we bring our faces close to the mosaic, we can admire the beauty of each stone.

But as we step back from it, we can see that all these little stones reveal to us a beautiful picture, telling a story none of these stones can tell by itself. That is what our life in community is about.

Each of us is like a little stone, but together we reveal the face of God to the world. Nobody can say: "I make God visible." But others who see us together can say: "They make God visible." Community is where humility and glory touch.

The liturgy concluded with a blessing from the Archbishop upon the members to go forth as

missionaries throughout the Archdiocese.

"Our Synod has ended. Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord!"

In all, I had attended three separate meetings, one of which was a retreat. The whole experience gave me the opportunity to meet with the other delegates, especially with those who were on my table. The delegates for the three sessions had to stay on the same table allocated to each delegate, my table featuring on page 1 of this issue of *The Bridge*.

In the last Synod meeting, I happened to be near Bishop Sophie from the Anglican Church, and it was a really good experience sharing our views about the whole process of our Catholic Synod.

I wish to thank sincerely Peter Bierer and Sarah Moffatt, the two leading persons largely responsible for organising the entire Synod process. In the coming weeks and months, the Synod Final Document and resources and gatherings to support local implementation of the outcomes will be shared.

The Synod might be over, but the work continues!

Pope Leo Sydney-bound for Eucharist28

The 54th international Eucharistic Congress 2028 (Eucharist28) is set for Sydney from 10 to 14 October 2028, with the pilgrimage culminating in a Papal Mass led by Pope Leo XIV.

The occasion also marks the 100th anniversary of the first Australian Eucharistic Congress held in 1928.

This Congress is a multi-year spiritual and cultural pilgrimage, inviting Catholics from Australia, Oceania and around the world to engage in prayer, catechesis and communal worship.

The event will be hosted at the International Convention Centre in Darling Harbour, with a programme including Eucharistic celebrations, keynote sessions, cultural performances, youth and family activities and exhibitions.

Eucharist28 is designed as a global encounter with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, emphasising both personal spiritual renewal and communal mission.

It aims to inspire participants to rediscover the Eucharist as the source and summit of Christian life, fostering a deeper love for Christ and encouraging Catholics to become His presence in their communities.

The event also celebrates the unity in diversity of the Church, bringing together people of all ages and backgrounds.

The global gathering of the Church promises to be a festival of faith, rich with worship, prayer, testimonies, art and music – a truly 'once in a lifetime' experience, and a transformative moment for our nation.



Pope Leo will celebrate the Papal Mass at Eucharist28 in Sydney in two years' time





Arabella finds it 'all done perfectly' through Jesus

Parishioner Arabella Farrugia returned to St Matthew's Bridgewater during her NET winter break to share her experiences thus far as she works to encourage young people to follow Jesus and find a home in the church



Arabella Farrugia, second from left, with her NET colleagues in Maroochydore on the Sunshine Coast

For those who don't know me, my name is Arabella and I have been a parishioner at St Matthew's since I was a little girl. Over the last 18 months, I have been on mission with National Evangelisation Teams – or NET Ministries – which currently has five teams across Australia and New Zealand seeking to encourage young people to follow Jesus and find a home in the church.

Last year, I was placed in Darwin and this year I am in Maroochydore on the Sunshine Coast, on a discipleship team that journeys with local high school students and in the surrounding parishes and communities.

I want to say thank you so much for all your prayers, encouragement, support and love over these past 18 months. I would not have been able to make it through without your support and I know NET wouldn't be able to continue their mission either, so thank you so much!

A highlight on mission has been being among the students at their schools and in break times, kicking the footy and having beautiful conversations. I am often in wonder of how often we underestimate the power of simply being present in someone's life. Mission life truly opened my eyes and my heart to just how profoundly our presence can impact others, especially in the young people I have encountered on mission.

I am constantly reminded that showing up, listening and loving people with intentionality is one of the greatest gifts we can offer. I am in awe of the way the Lord has been moving in my life, how he has taken my ordinary 'yes', and used it to share the

message of the Gospel to thousands of young people. I am reminded daily that by my own strength I can do nothing...it is all done perfectly through Jesus.

In June 2025, we travelled to Katherine to run retreats with senior students at St Joseph's College, and I thoroughly enjoyed working in a rural area with a small number of kids. One day, a girl showed absolutely no interest in the games, activities or small group discussion.

However, after having a simple conversation about cowgirl boots, she began to open up. When the retreat ended, she sought me out and, with tears in her eyes, shared how she used to go to church before the loss of her mother. She thanked me for showing her that Jesus is always present and loves her.

I see the Lord working tremendously through the young people in Australia and I cannot wait to see what more he has in store for them.

Regarding my sponsorship, thank you for your support, for being co-missionaries with me in this mission to encourage young people to follow Jesus and find a home in the Church. Each year, missionaries are each required to raise \$6,900 to sustain the mission and cover our daily living expenses.

If anything I have shared has prompted or stirred something in your heart, I encourage you not to ignore it. Whether you feel called to donate online via a dedicated QR code, or offer support through your prayers, please know that it is greatly appreciated.



Candidates receive Sacrament of Confirmation

The Sacramental Programme Class of 2026 reached a significant milestone in their faith journey on Friday 26 June when receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation from Vicar General Fr Dean Marin.

Our congratulations to all, pictured above with, left, Fr Dean, Fr Fred, parish pastoral coordinator Cathie Oswald, school principal John Low and APRIM Krystina Dawe, and above right, enjoying tea and cake in the Our Lady of the Adelaide Hills parish hall

Marcia Phillips donates spiritual books to parish

Former parishioner, Marcia Phillips has donated many of her late husband Prof Garry Phillips' spiritual book collection to the parish.

Marcia, who recently downsized and moved to a retirement apartment in Glen Osmond, joined Fr Fred in blessing what is now a small lending library in the foyer at St Matthew's Bridgewater and dedicating it to Garry's memory. Garry died from motor neuron disease at age 79 in July 2016 and is remembered for his outstanding contribution to the fields of anaesthesia and intensive care medicine. He also gave generously in Papua New Guinea, where he became the first visiting Professor of Anaesthesia and helped develop an anaesthetic course at the University of PNG.



Marcia Phillips at the dedication of the library to husband Garry's memory



The state of the paper mache angels when they were donated to OLOR by friends of Gabrielle Morgan, left, and following Fr Fred's skilled restorative work, below

Fr Fred goes where angels fear to tread

Fr Fred's restorative skills have again been at work, with a painstaking exercise to bring a donation of two angels to life and have them adorn the altar at the OLOR church.

A gift from Barbara and Eddie Domin in memory of their dear friend and recently deceased parishioner, Gabrielle Morgan, the two kneeling paper mache angels appeared, at first glance, to be fine. Closer inspection, however, revealed that the paint had worn out.

That's when Fr Fred got to work, restoring them to their former glory to enjoy pride of place facing the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.





Ecology, one step at a time

By John Leeton

With the building of the new hall almost four years ago, a suitable path from the parish house to the hall, frequently used by Fr Fred and parish staff, was not constructed...and this became a primary project at our St Matthew's Working Bee on Saturday 27 June.

Our first task was to create a step from the back of the hall, which had previously been a two concrete sleeper high jump. With that ticked off, we will now develop the path, understanding that ecology is also about improving our daily access and beautifying our space.

We would dearly love to increase our Working Bee team, so if you're up for anything from doing a bit of pruning or weeding to tackling more demanding tasks, we want to hear from you. The feeling is great. We have so many laughs and really feel rewarded for what might appear such a small effort.

As we say, it's one step at a time...



Dan DeFazio, Des Stapleton and John Leeton on the step they created

Global Justice Report: Plan for Equality and Prosperity

Contributed by John Leeton

The Global Justice Report attempts to set out a new vision for global progress in the 21st century: grounding human development and equality in planetary habitability.

It explores the conditions under which the world could move toward this horizon and traces an economically and ecologically consistent transition path from 2026 to 2100.

Its main conclusion is simple: it is possible to reconcile planetary habitability and high well-being for all, but only if the transformation rests on three pillars simultaneously. Fast decarbonisation of energy systems is necessary. But we also need a

major shift toward sufficiency – understood as a sharp reduction in labour hours and material footprint and large changes in consumption patterns, food habits, land use, and forest cover.

In addition, neither decarbonisation nor sufficiency can be financed

and politically sustained without a reduction in inequality of income, wealth and power, both between countries and within them. The compression of global inequality is not only compatible with deep decarbonization; it is a necessary condition for shared prosperity on a finite planet.

The Global Justice Report is the first attempt to propose a fully quantified plan going in this direction, combining four dimensions that today's debates often treat separately: redistribution at the world scale, a deep reform of the international financial and economic order, a radical transformation of energy systems, and substantial shifts in consumption patterns.

Compared to most climate scenarios, including by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the main novelty is that we model all four dimensions together and place inequality and sufficiency at the centre of the analysis.

Concretely: Per capita monthly national income converges to €5,000 in every country, closing a 16-fold gap. The share of the bottom half of global wealth increases from 2% to 30%, while the share of the billionaire class decreases from 6% to 0.05%.

Nearly 90% of the world's population double their income while working roughly half as many hours as they do today. Warming reaches 1.8°C by 2100, rather than over 4°C under baseline macroeconomic and policy trends.



EXISTING CHURCH BEHIND

CURVED BRICK PARAPET

STAINED GLASS LEAD LIGHT

CURVED BRICK PARAPET

NEW BELL IN BELFRY

EXISTING RETAINING

NEW WALL 1000 IN FRONT OF EXISTING WALL

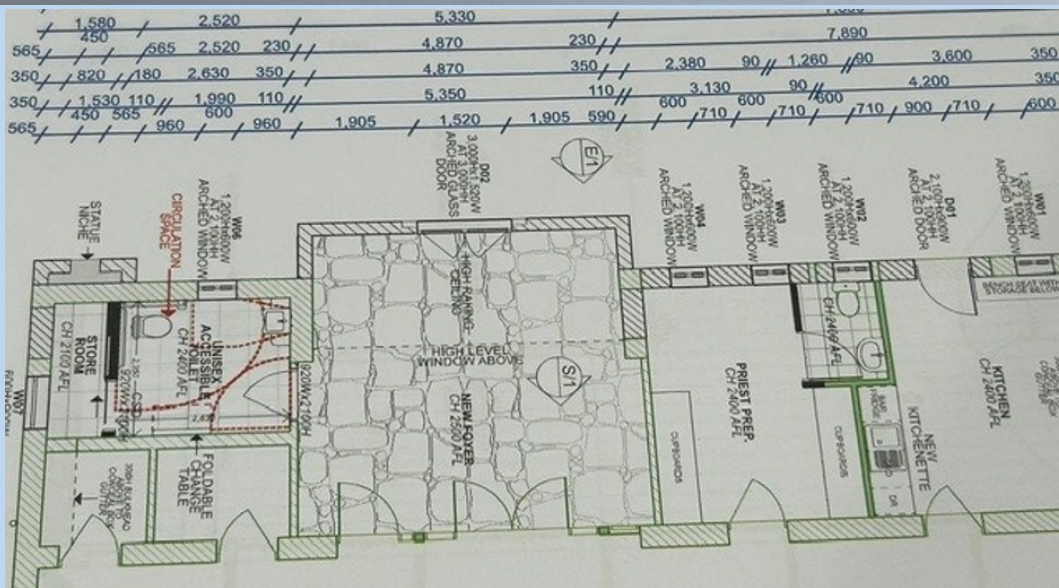
EXISTING WALL TO BE RESULT WITH NEW OPENINGS

NEW BELFRY WITH STATUETTE NICHE

WEMBLY AVE ELEVATION

1:100

The plan includes the construction of a new unisex and disability toilet, both accessed from within the



Architectural drawings of the proposed new façade, top, and above, the detailed plan for the entire project

It's important to point out that the roofs of both the current toilets and the children's room have significant leaks that are causing mould on the ceilings, as does the box room in the foyer. In addition, the external walls which make up the front of the church are also afflicted by mould due to the overflow of the rainwater.

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Plan pros and cons

All these issues were presented in a PowerPoint presentation during the last Bridgewater Community Meeting, along with the new designs.

The conclusion after all these consultations is that it does not make financial sense to attend only to the repair of these pressing problems, and that the most prudent approach is to proceed with the entire project and so spread the cost.

At this point, the plans have been submitted to the Adelaide Hills Council and received council approval, and we are now seeking an engineering report to determine the cost of the project.

And while Fr Fred has yet to formally present the project to the church office, he has spoken to the person responsible and will now await the cost estimate of the project before, firstly, seeking the approval of both the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) and the Parish Finance Council (PFC), and, secondly, submitting the application to Archbishop O'Regan.

The overriding opinion is that we face a clear choice: we either proceed with the project as planned or we leave everything as it is, including the structural issues and leakages.

However, sooner or later, we are going to have to attend to the damages, the mould and the intermittent flooding. And when that time arrives, we can be sure that the price will have increased significantly.



Significant leaks continue to cause damage to the children's room

Parish marks Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday



Our parish celebrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday on 5 July, inviting all into reflection at a time when we mark 40 years since St Pope John Paul II spoke to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Alice Springs.

We also celebrate 50 years of NAIDOC Week, both milestones reminders of enduring faith, resilience and our shared call to walk together. At times, it is important to look back, not to dwell in the past but to recognise the path that has been travelled and to see the strength, the challenges and the grace that have carried us forward.

Our theme, Walking Together in Christ: 40 Years On!, speaks to this moment and calls us to continue the journey with humility and hope, listening deeply and walking side by side as one Body in Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit.

The altar adorned with indigenous artefacts, Fr Fred called on us to walk together with the nation's first people

A super effort on Souper Sunday sees \$1,700 raised for Kopanang

By the Social Justice Group's Cathie Oswald

Among the various activities held each year by the Social Justice team, one of the most popular is our Super Sunday which we use to raise funds for the Kopanang community in Johannesburg, South Africa.

This year, on the weekend of 20 and 21 June and thanks to the generosity of our parishioners, not only did we sell all the soup but there were numerous donations made, a combination that led to a wonderful result of \$1,700, all of which has been sent to Kopanang to purchase much-needed blankets.

When the people at Kopanang advised us in an email that there is always a need for warm blankets for the women of the community – particularly the older women whose legs and joints suffer most in the cold Johannesburg winters – we estimated that to provide blankets for 40 women, we would need to sell 175 containers of soup.

The team members set to work, making close to 90 litres of soup of various varieties, from pea and ham to potato and leek, and on to pumpkin, spicy sweet potato and Moroccan lamb.

Some parishioners pre-ordered their soup while others preferred to buy theirs on the day. Team members organised the packaging and distribution of the various pre-ordered soup and others were on hand to sell what had not been ordered.

There were a few issues involved in the storage of the soup as it was made, but Des Stapleton came to the rescue with his camper freezer, which eased the pressure on the hall fridge.

Thank you, Des.

The other problem we encountered was how to manage the delivery of soup to the northern end, but Margaret Smitherman volunteered to take charge in her usual efficient way and the problem was solved.

Thank you, Margaret.

My thanks to the Social Justice team, to all who purchased our soup and to all who made donations.

It is such a small thing we do, but it makes a difference to the 40 women who are part of the Kopanang community. Indeed, they were moved to send us this message:

Please send our love and heartfelt thanks to your parish. We are deeply grateful not only for your generosity, but also for your prayers and for thinking of us during this bitterly cold winter.



Fr Fred prepares his Souper Sunday purchase

Big win with BIG W statue

By Fr Fred

When Tom Kenyon told me he had bought a statue of the Virgin Mary from BIG W for just \$100, I immediately thought he was joking – and on two counts!

What would BIG W be doing selling statues of the Virgin Mary? And at that price?

A few days later, he appeared at the parish house with a big parcel. When he opened it, there was the statue of the Virgin Mary for \$100 from BIG W. I

had to swallow my words and thank Tom for his generosity.

Thanks to John Leeton, the statue has since been erected in the back yard of the parish house on a beautiful pedestal Debbie Somers rescued when someone was throwing away a huge fountain.

The statue, left, now looks towards the church, asking for her blessings towards our parish and our protection from bush fires.





St Catherine's Catholic School News

*As the second term drew to a close and thoughts turned to a well-earned winter break, the school's **APRIM, Krystina Dawe**, shared a number of staff and student highlights, including an enriching Staff Reflection Day, a Breakfast Drive in support of Vinnies, students celebrating their Confirmation and the Year 5s showcasing their movie-making skills*

Many Voices, One Journey

Our staff recently gathered for a deeply enriching Reflection Day centred on the theme Many Voices, One Journey and during which we explored the many ways we encounter God through prayer, recognising that prayer can be expressed in a variety of meaningful forms and that each person's prayer journey is unique. Music played a special role in our reflection, providing moments of stillness, inspiration and connection, while staff shared songs that have shaped or supported their own faith journeys.

The day also offered space to pause, pray, listen and reconnect with our shared mission as Catholic educators. We are grateful for the opportunity to nourish our own spiritual lives so that we may continue to lead with faith, compassion and hope as we accompany our students and families each day.

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Winter Wake Up Breakfast Drive

Our school community recently came together in a wonderful display of generosity for our Winter Wake Up Breakfast Drive, organised by our School Captains in support of the St Vincent de Paul Society Winter Appeal. Students embraced the spirit of the day by wearing their pyjamas and donating breakfast essentials such as cereal, porridge, long-life milk, baked beans, tea, coffee and other pantry staples. These donations will help Vinnies provide much-needed support to individuals

and families doing it tough during the colder winter months.

We are incredibly proud of our School Captains for their leadership, initiative and commitment to putting faith into action. Their efforts reminded us that even small acts of kindness can make a significant difference in the lives of others. A heartfelt thank you to our students, families and staff for your overwhelming generosity and support. Together, we have demonstrated what it means to live out our school values through compassion, service and care for our wider community.

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Celebrating Sacrament of Confirmation



In recent months, children and their families have been participating in the Sacramental Programme, preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Through prayer, learning and reflection, candidates have grown in their understanding of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and what it means to live as active disciples of Christ.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all of our Confirmation candidates on this significant milestone in their faith journey. Confirmation is a special moment in which the Holy Spirit strengthens and guides us, empowering us to live with courage, compassion and faith as members of the Church.

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Lights, Camera, Animation!

Across Term 2, our Year 5 students have created their own stop-motion animation movies as part of their Media Arts and Digital Technologies learning. Working both collaboratively and independently, students planned, designed and filmed their stories, carefully considering how to bring their ideas to life.

They then enhanced their movies by adding music, sound effects and editing, learning how to refine their work throughout the creative process. The project provided students with great opportunities to develop their creativity, communication, problem-solving and digital technology skills.



Birdwood hosts interesting Upper South Eastern CWL meet

By Gayle Raven

An interesting and worthwhile time was had by all who attended the 24 June 2026 CWL Upper South Eastern Regional Meeting hosted by Birdwood CWL in the Mary O'Dea Centre.

Members from CWLs at Birdwood, Stirling, Murray Bridge and the CWL State and Archdiocesan Executive (pictured above) gathered in fellowship, reporting on their year's activities and sharing experiences.

The day started at 10am with Mass in St Matthews Church, Birdwood, celebrated by Fr Fred, and enriched by the beautiful guitar music and singing by Michael Russell.

During the meeting, it was enlightening to hear of all the worthwhile endeavours by each of the CWLs and the State and Archdiocesan Executive. A delicious lunch followed, giving all time to share stories.

After lunch, our excellent guest speaker, Aylene Mueller, shared the valuable role played by the Birdwood Community Pantry. We were impressed to hear of the incredible work done by the dedicated Pantry members in their support of those in need, many of whom are escaping domestic violence, with food parcels and vouchers.

Sadly, those in need, is ever increasing. We were very pleased to present Aylene, at the end of her talk, with \$400 generously donated by those in attendance.



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Upcoming Parish Activity

Sunday 5 to Sunday 12 July – NAIDOC Week across the parish

Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 July – Adelaide Fire Weekend. Catholic faith renewal event, Blackfriars Priory School, Prospect Road, Prospect

Sunday 12 July – Welcome into the Catholic Community of Thomas and Connor, OLOR Stirling East during 5.30pm Mass

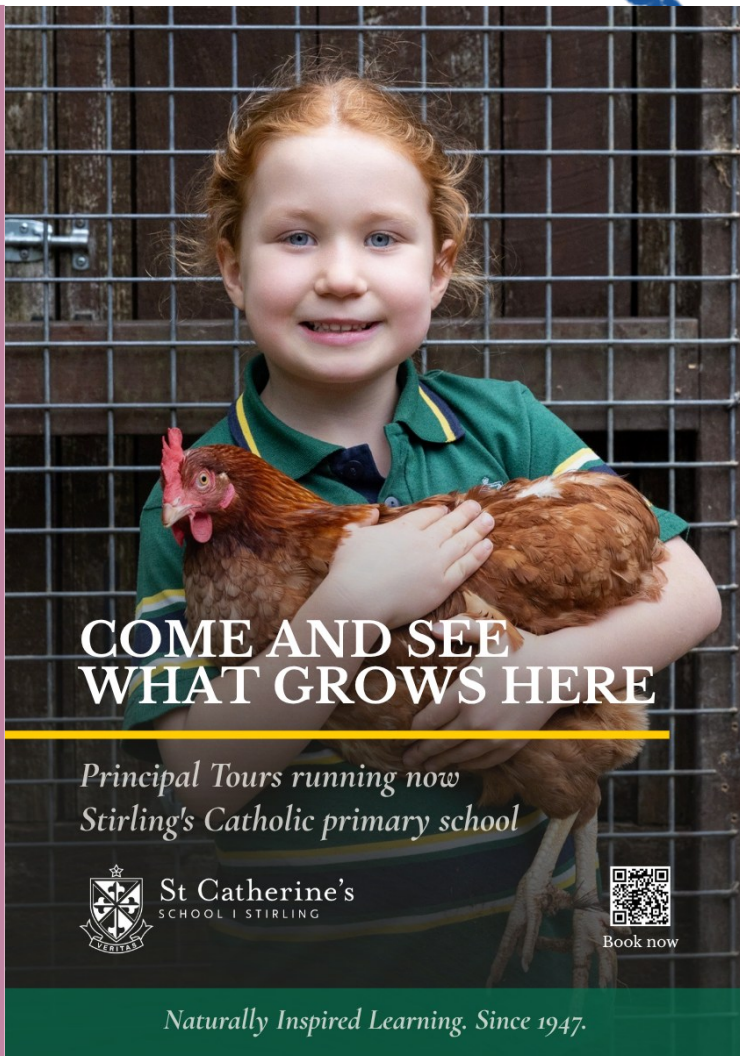
Wednesday 15 July – Parish Pastoral Council meeting, OLAH Hall, St Matthew's Bridgewater, 6.00pm

Thursday 16 July – Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Mass at OLOR Stirling East, 9.00am

Sunday 19 July – Children's Mass, St Matthew's Bridgewater, 10.30am

Monday 20 July – Feast of St Mary Magdalene, Mass at OLOR Stirling East, 9.00am

Sunday 26 July, World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, Mass at St Joseph's Lobethal at 8.30am, St Matthew's Bridgewater at 10.30am and OLOR Stirling East at 5.30pm



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As this directory changes from time to time, anyone wishing to volunteer for any of the parish activities listed below is asked to please contact the parish office.

1 Wembley Avenue (PO Box 713), Bridgewater SA 5155

P: 08 8359 0674 W: www.adelaidehillsparish.com.au E: stmatthew@adelaidehillsparish.com.au

PARISH OFFICE

Parish Priest

Fr Alfred Farrugia 8359 0674

Parish Pastoral Coordinator

Cathie Oswald 8359 0674

Parish Secretary

Paul Robinson 0408 855 178

Baptism Teams

Helen Cantwell 8390 3290
Maria Thompson 0408 898 357
Anne Moore 0417 861 373
Eric Toome 0418 896 695
Deb Stapleton 0408 835 990
Pam Broadbridge 8339 5013

Catholic Women's League

Barbara Mott (Bridgewater) 8339 1083
Gayle Raven (Birdwood) 0419 807 463

Children's Liturgy

Jane van Mierle 0438 723 259

Choir

Damien Mansfield 8339 4133

Christian Life Communities

Paris Huffman 0400 283 683

Ecology Group

John Leeton 0419 243 814

Faith Formation Team

Fr Fred (Chair) 8359 0674
Paris Huffman (Secretary) 0400 283 683

Finance and Maintenance (F&M) Committee

Paul Howe (Chair) 8388 5281

F&M Birdwood Contact

Gayle Raven 0419 807 463

Hills Combined Christian Churches

Maria Thompson 0408 898 357

Liturgy

Birdwood and Lobethal - Fr Fred 8359 0674

Men's Spirituality Coordinators

Paul Somers 8339 5118

Dan De Fazio 8339 3393

Our Lady of the Rosary Community

Representative

Debbie Somers 8339 5118

Parish Atrium

Sue Sachse 0431 117 840

Parish Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/adelaidehillsparish

Parish Pastoral Council

John Leeton (Chair) 0419 243 814

Rosary Group

Paul Anderson 0416 032 925

Sacraments

Call Parish Office 8359 0674

Baptisms
Weddings
Reconciliation
Communion to the Sick
Religious Education

Safeguarding (formerly Child Protection)

Mark McGeough 0419 150 758

St Catherine's Catholic School

22 Ayers Hill Road
Stirling SA 5152 8238 8238

Principal - John Low
School Board Chair - Ben Clements

St Matthew's Sewing Group

Stasia Duszynski 8339 4396

St Vincent de Paul Society

Marianne Berry (Stirling) 0407 903 382
Lea Crosby (Northern End) 0431 092 725

Social Justice Group

Cathie Oswald 0428 244 958

The Bridge

Paul Robinson (Editor) 0408 855 178

WHS Volunteer

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