



Parish of St Gerard and St Anne

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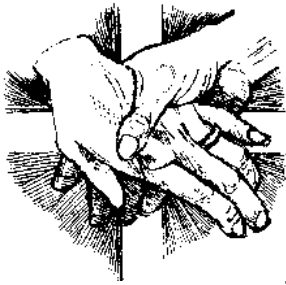
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Parish of St Gerard & St Anne

Annual General Meeting

21 April 2024

“Reaching out in **prayer, hospitality and action.**”



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Parish Prayer

Heavenly Father,

**Pour out your spirit upon the people of this parish of
St. Gerard and St Anne.**

**Grant us a new vision of your glory,
a new experience of your power,
a new faithfulness to your word,
and a new consecration to your service
so that we may reach out in prayer,
hospitality and action.**

**May your love grow within us
and may your kingdom come.**

Amen

Address to Parishioners

Dear Parishioners,

Our Parish Annual General Meeting provides the opportunity to look back at the past year and look forward to the year ahead. Many groups make up the fabric of our Parish. We encourage these groups to inform the broader community about their work and activities.

The reports that follow offer an insight into the fantastic work done by various groups and the important contributions made by members of these groups and many other individuals, in bringing to life our Parish motto : 'Reaching out in Prayer, Hospitality and Action'.

I invite you to take some time out of your busy schedules to read these reports, reflecting on our achievements while also giving thought to new initiatives and opportunities you would like your Parish Pastoral Council to consider as part of planning for the 2023/2024.

Parish Pastoral Council Chairpersons Report:

Chris Harris

The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) meets monthly and acts as a forum for discussion on matters concerning our Parish and school community. I am proud of the PPC and their continued support.

Current members of the PPC include:

Chris Harris (chair), Ellen Holmes, Anne-Marie Stevenson, Shireen Hoser, Bernadette Peyton, Margaret Milczuk, Arsenio Tuazon (Parish Priest), Parish Secretary Kerry McGowan (Admin support).

Throughout the year, the PPC continued to focus on various Parish matters including:

- Child Safe Guarding Committee
- Police Checks, Working with Children Checks
- Take the Way of the Gospel
- Sacraments – Baptisms, Reconciliation, First Eucharis & Confirmation
- Sunday Mass – St Gerard's Church and St Anne's Church
- Support to Holy Spirit for Alpha and Winter Shelter initiatives

St Gerard's Church in Warrandyte has been the subject of much discussion. We have been approached by the Greater Melbourne Cemetery Trust (GMCT) about the possibility of selling land to increase the size of the cemetery. The general direction we have been pursuing would see St Gerard's Church retained, along with access to an improved car park, but the land would otherwise pass to GMCT.

We thank current members for their continued support, time and contribution. I would also commend to anyone wanting to take a more active role in Parish activities to consider joining us on Council.

Finance Committee Members

Fr Arsenio Tuazon, Kevin Stevenson, Bernadette Peyton and Jill McLean

Annual Financial Statement for 2023

The AFS was lodged with Archdiocese February 2024 (due by 31 March each year).

The AFS was prepared for first time using Xero as required by Archdiocese. This change, achieved in November, involved re-entering all of 2023 transactions and balances again. But we have an improved system as a result.

Key Figures

There was a net accrual loss of \$57,842 for 2023, after non-cash charges of \$87,873 (depreciation). The positive net cash result was \$30,031. The improved cash result was principally due to 2023 sponsorship income (Strawberry Fair and other fund raising - \$23566), and reduced staffing costs with Ana's departure reducing paid hours from 29 to 12).

The Thanksgiving and Collections income was solid (\$34,647), as was the yield from our investments (\$33,020). However, the Parish Levy was disappointing at \$5210, despite the levy being 10% lower. The pressure on household budgets was probably a factor.

In relation to expenses, we continued to keep things very tight, but, like Parishioners, we faced material price rises for existing services. Electricity, gas and water cost \$7,123, insurance cost \$11,582 and the Archdiocese levy was \$8,674. Staff costs were \$26,565.

What these numbers do not show is that insurance for 2024 year has increased to nearly \$14,000 with the withdrawal of Catholic Insurances from the market and transference of all parishes' insurance to Aon.

They also do not show how the need for repairs and maintenance costs (e.g. painting is needed and will cost \$22,500) is growing.

At the time of writing we do not know what the Strawberry Fair income for 2024 will be. We hope it will be a respectable number.

Other matters being considered are the possible realization of some land at Warrandyte and the possibility of renting the Parish residence. The former looks less promising as we go, but the latter might generate material income.

Overall

The policy of diversifying our income so as not to be overly dependent on Thanksgiving and Strawberry Fair has worked well, but we face material maintenance costs, the need to resurrect the school levy program and the need to better utilize our assets. We also face the need to provide more administrative staff support. Kerry is bearing too much.

Our parish Child Safe-Guarding Committee members are: Paul Moritz (chairperson), Chris Dale, Michelle Kemm and Anne-Marie Stevenson.

Parish Child-Safeguarding Committees have been formed at the instigation of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne in response to the sexual misconduct issues raised over the last few years. The Committee is responsible for overseeing the parish compliance with the 11 Child and Young Adult Safe-Guarding Standards set by the Archdiocese to ensure that we comply with the 11 Standards required by the Australian Government.

With the resumption of mass at St. Anne's on one Sunday per month we have taken the opportunity to resume Children's Liturgy on that Sunday but we have no other parish child focussed groups or activities at this point. Nevertheless, we are required to implement all standards to the best of our ability. The areas most likely to affect the general community are these:

All parish staff, permanent, part time or casual and all volunteers, in any capacity whatsoever, are required to provide evidence to the parish secretaries that they have current Police and Working With Children checks and to sign a Child-Safeguarding Code of Conduct Commitment Declaration form which will be kept on file in the parish office.

We must make available, both on our website and in hard copy form,

1. A Child-Safeguarding Statement of Commitment
2. A Child Safe-Guarding Code of Conduct
3. A Child Safeguarding Policy
4. A Child Safeguarding Complaints Reporting Pathway

The parish does have a dedicated Child-Safeguarding email address, published weekly in our Newsletter and all members of the Committee are approachable, discreet and committed to confidentiality.

It is strongly recommended that we display a number of Child-Safeguarding documents in the Church, which we have done at St. Gerard's but not yet at St. Anne's. *Mea Culpa*.

It is also strongly recommended that we have regular brief talks from the Child-Safeguarding Committee to keep our community informed and aware of our collective and individual responsibility for the safety of all children and young adults within our community. We have not been strong in this area, with only one brief talk after a Sunday mass. I am happy to report, however, that we had a very strong representation from our parish at a training session at Holy Spirit late last year. Brech Burgess, the Eastern Region representative of the Child Safeguarding arm of the Professional Standards Unit of the Archdiocese of Melbourne took us through the current most vital areas requiring our attention.

The Child-Safeguarding Standards cover many more areas than these, but this is the Keep It Simple version. The Archdiocese is monitoring quite closely for compliance and we are doing our best within our limited resources to keep up to date with requirements.

The key areas of focus for our professional learning/staff support in 2023 have included:

- Our Catholic Identity
- The Gospels
- Infancy Stories in Luke and Matthew

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

On Friday 9th June I facilitated a whole staff Faith Formation Day here at school. The main focus was to share the life story of our school saint St Anne. To learn about who she was, her Charisms and how our school values of Respect, Forgiveness, Honesty and Compassion were evident in her life.

We spent time revisiting our School Vision Statement and exploring the Catholic Identity within our school. I posed questions like, 'How is our school different from the local primary school down the street?' and 'What makes our school a Catholic school?'

We also looked closely at the signs and symbols present here at St Anne's that identify our catholic culture. Our gingerbread mosaics and our school logo. Staff were given the opportunity to reflect on whether or not they felt that the school vision and the charisms of St Anne were represented through them.

THE GOSPELS

Prue Vansten from MACS facilitated a staff PLM on Tuesday 29th August. The focus of this PLM was understanding more deeply the origins of our four gospel writers and some scripture excerpts. Gaining a deeper perspective of when they wrote their gospels and who they were written for. Prue shared with the staff how we can use scripture to explore the three worlds of the text.

INFANCY STORIES IN LUKE and MATTHEW

On Wednesday 11th October I facilitated a staff PLM that compared Luke and Matthew's infancy narratives. Comparisons were made between the two stories and their authors and a deeper understanding was shared on how they came about.

WHOLE SCHOOL MASSES for 2024

- Staff Commissioning Mass
- Ash Wednesday Mass
- St Anne's Feast Day Mass
- Feast of the Assumption Mass
- All Saints Day Mass
- End of Year Mass
- Graduation Mass

LEVEL MASSES

We have continued to have Level Masses each term. Students are becoming more familiar with the order of the mass, singing and listening. They are engaged during Father Arsenio's homilies and keen to participate in readings and prayers. Parents and parishioners are still in low attendance and will be an area to focus on in 2024.

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM

Students have successfully received the sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Eucharist.

RECONCILIATION

Children participated in a Workshop (during school hours) and received the sacrament during an evening in Term 1.

CONFIRMATION

Children enjoyed a Reflection Day off site, visiting St Patrick's Cathedral for a full rehearsal and the Mary Mackillop Centre.

FIRST EUCHARIST

We ran a Parent/Child Workshop one evening in Term 3 and a full Reflection Day at school where students enjoyed a shared lunch, kindly provided by the parish.

CURRICULUM

As teachers in a Catholic school, we continue to provide a curriculum that promotes the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. It is paramount that the students understand their faith is connected to the choices we make, how we live our lives, how we form our relationships and how and why we reach out to others.

This promotes the values of participation, inclusion and equality and allows even our youngest students to experience the positive difference that they can make in the world.

This term, as a community, we will again offer our support to the St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal, which is a wonderful opportunity to connect with the mission and vision of the Church.

BACKGROUND

The Committee held 8 meetings: monthly through Oct- Dec 2023 and weekly from end Jan - Feb 2024. A stall holders meeting was held in the Parish 3 weeks prior to the fair. The number of meetings were all held online via Google meet to reduce the impact on member's time. We found that having small subcommittee meetings was much more useful than large meetings making them quicker. Advance of \$10k was requested from the Parish and approved. We have paid all of that money back now.

SPONSORSHIP

The Committee secured a record of \$21,025 from 30 business sponsorships including a grant of \$3700 from Warrandyte Bank for stage and sound costs. In addition we earned \$3677 from the Silent Auction items donated.

RAFFLE

The raffle generated \$8,731.59 in income. This amount was increased by a further \$5,000 and \$2,000 from donations of the 'Friends of Strawberry Fair'

Overall profit: \$43,175.62

School will receive \$21,587.81

Parish will receive \$18,202.78

GST claim is \$3,385.03

KEY CHANGES / POINTS IN 2024

Operoo was used as the primary point of disseminating information to families; Class reps were advised not to send messages. Think this needs to be reviewed next year especially for the foundation. The Foundation and 1/2 levels needed more guidance this is still an issue

2-tier slap band prices were \$30 & \$40 for pre order. We reduced the tier 1 price by \$5. Total sales 183 bands (16 x Tier 1; 65 x Tier 2) total sales \$4680 (decrease of \$2359 on 2023); Total ride costs had increased substantially since 2020. Ride prices increase on the day to \$35 and \$45. The total cost of the rides was \$21,217 and the total sales for rides \$14,936.46 leaving a shortfall of \$6,280.54

Fun Run record of entrant's approx. 3 family groups and 15 single runners pre-registered. There were a few more registered on the day taking a total of \$313. It was discussed by a number of people that they would love to do the run but are involved in the morning activities. It may be a suggestion to move the fun run to another day or earlier time. At the final meeting the committee feels it makes a great start to the day.

Cost of Travelling Fete \$500

Entertainment line-up, Started with Father Arsenio and welcome by Nicole Werner MP; There were 2 paid performers – Reptile Encounter reptile show and Sarah Catina. There was great feedback about both paid performances however would suggest moving the reptile type show later in day if staying with the sat fair.

Continued use of social media promotion via Facebook – Which was revved up to the best social media promotion ever!

Purchase of new stall signs to match with the strawberry theme for the new stalls. We also purchased 4 Eskis and had them labelled as well as Traffic management street signs to reduce costs and effort to borrow eski on the day.

Stalls re/introduced: Hot Dogs and Plants

Stalls removed: Skin Transfers, Nachos / churros.

Local community groups included: Parkwood Dance Academy, Sharks, Paul Saddler swimland, Firestorm Martial Arts and Maroondah United Football club.

An ATM was hired for the day \$726 and a total of approx \$7000 was used from it.

4 eftpos terminals were also hired from Tyro

Main marquee provided by Aussie Events so one supplier providing rides, stage, canopy and main marquee same as 2023

Moved location of Stage to make area open up and be more inclusive to the top area

Street signs were in 8 places in strategic areas to increase reach i.e. Mitcham; Tortice Drive;

Used the same money transport collection service \$324.50

Had an overnight security officer and dog on site all of the Friday night 8pm-6:30am. This was a donation from a current School family as a sponsor

COMMITTEE

Sincere thanks to the members of the Committee for their dedication and enthusiasm:

- Danielle Tregenza (Rides)
- Steve McCartney / Darren Robertson and Frank Lopardi. (Infrastructure Coordinator)
- Lillie Lai and Julia Slussareff (Finance)
- Michael Edmonds (Teacher Rep)
- Sarah Skillern (Raffle)
- Diane Earls and Tania Prior-Smith (workforce coordinator)
- Marienela Romito (Social Media)
- Sarah Weston (Showcase)
- Alex Somersby, Janette Demetrios and Cherie Lancaster. Emma Roberts(Auction)
- Evan Jones (Graphic designer)

We thank our dedicated stall holders, stall workforce, teachers, and Principal - Michael Edmonds and Bronwyn in the School office and Kevin and Kerry in the Parish. Our thanks to families of past students who continue to support the school and Parish by contributing to the Fair.

PROPOSAL FOR 2024 FAIR

We will try to get more donations of things to be on the Raffle to reduce the outgoing costs.

Review sponsorship structure re prices and what we provide.

We need to also look into the possibility of purchasing a shipping container approx \$3,000 to purchase new with 9 year warranty as it costs us about \$1000 each year to rent. It could then be fitted out with shelving and donations for toys / books could be donated from Nov / Dec. Currently the school has earthmoving and concreting families that may be able to help at reduced rates to make it permanent. We thought the far corner of the back car park would be a suitable location with a path - it could also be used as an art construction for grade 6 to paint outside of the container each year.

We are also conducting a survey on the possibility of a Sunday fair - it has been a positive result from the school committee. I know the parish had reservations however we could have a mass on stage at the morning of the fair to encourage more to attend. Mass 9:30 Start fair 10:30 am? I will forward the survey results.

We can't continue asking the same people to take off Friday - with people losing money, holiday days etc: I am self-employed so no holiday or sick pay when not working.

We also battle with Basketball finals during March - it was really hard to get volunteers this year even more than other years - I certainly don't have any ability to change when the game times get released as needs to be after the previous sat game.

We also conflicted with a school parent large bday party which took a large number out of the event for the afternoon, hence a Sunday would reduce social conflicts.

The fair is a celebration of Family and community both which I believe is to be important for the Church to celebrate on Sundays. I have been told it is a day of rest however the current lifestyle for most of us doesn't reflect that these days with shops open 7 days a week. The Strawberry fair is an amazing celebration of our community which would be great to still celebrate on a Sunday as a trial.

There could also be a possibility of making it a 10:30/11am-4pm so it can be made to not conflict with a morning church service.

Do we need to consider keeping a slush fund in the bank? Would \$5000 (\$2500 from School and Parish) be possible?

Would we be able to have \$300 (\$150) from each Parish / School for a celebration for the Committee / final meeting?

The St. Gerard and St. Anne's Liturgy Committee consists, at present, of Donna Mirabella, Jill McLean and Anne-Marie Stevenson, with valuable support generally from Kerry McGowan, parish secretary.

The brief for our Liturgy Committee is to make all our liturgies as meaningful and prayerful as possible. This is as important for our normal Sunday liturgies as it is for the special times of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter, although these specific seasons do merit some extra time and energy.

The committee carefully considers the readings for each Sunday as a basis for music selection and Prayers of Intercession. There are many Sundays of the year with specific themes, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday, and this adds another layer to our preparation. It is also our responsibility to ensure that our worship space is always a prayerful and appropriate environment which reflects particular feasts or themes for each Sunday.

St. Anne's school is an important part of our faith community and having the children involved with Sunday mass is a priority for our parish. Welcoming our Foundation students each year, offering year level masses, Confirmation and Eucharist commitment masses and having our First Eucharist students receive the sacrament for the first time at our Sunday mass are all vital for maintaining a healthy link between the school and the wider parish community. The Liturgy Committee works with Pastoral Council to make these masses meaningful and welcoming for everyone.

The liturgy committee is also responsible for the small gifts or special touches that mark occasions such as Mother's and Father's Day and All Saints Day in our parish.

We are, as you can see, a small committee which does a great deal of work and we are always very grateful to the volunteers who help when extra hands are essential if we are to get things done or when we need more than the usual number of readers or ministers.

Our biggest challenge, as always, is to keep our liturgies fresh so they remain meaningful to the congregation. We have been doing this now for many years and it can be difficult to bring fresh eyes to something we have done many times before, especially as we are all getting older and slower. In the past, with more members, we have been able to bounce ideas around and regenerate enthusiasm.

Anybody is welcome to join us, no special skills are required. Each member of this committee began simply with a love for this community and a desire to keep our wonderful liturgies alive and flourishing. Learning happens on the job, and every opinion is valued because new perspectives do create energy and insight, so please, if you are interested in joining us come and chat to me.

God School / After School Religious Education:

At time of printing AGM documents, God school is no longer available at the Parish of St Gerard and St Anne (due to Ana's departure). Candidates are invited to attend classes at Holy Spirit Parish in Ringwood North. The classes are held on Sunday afternoons at 4pm-5pm in the parish house at Holy Spirit during the school term (excluding long weekends). All Welcome! We are currently advertising at our local state schools in Park Orchards, Warrandyte, Anderson Creek and Warrantor for children who wish to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Eucharist & Confirmation.

RCIA:

Anne-Marie Stevenson

This year, sadly, our parish had no enquiries about RCIA and therefore no journey. I did take advantage of one of the Saturday seminars offered by the Archdiocese to further my own education about ways to enhance the journey for anyone who chooses to join us in the future.

The RCIA process allows the candidate (someone already baptized into a different Christian Church) or catechumen (someone seeking to be baptized into the Catholic faith) to discover what is involved in being Catholic. It is always a journey of discovery, an exploration of the many ways in which we are blessed by the grace, mercy and love of God.

The parish has a small library of RCIA centred texts, the RCIA department in Archdiocese's Office of Evangelisation monitors our progress and we have Fr. Arsenio as a resource also, so we have access to solid support in all we do. Each session involves some reading of scripture as well as wide ranging discussion of the topic for the day.

We had no enquiries about RCIA this year and therefore no journey. I am preparing to commence a new RCIA journey in September/October 2024. All enquirers are welcome to contact me directly or the parish office.

Anne-Marie: bbannemarie@gmail.com or 0416 250 006

Parish Office: parkorchards@cam.org.au or 7064 3922

The Ark:

Bernadette Peyton

The Ark is predominantly used by the Parish School for Out of Hours School Care and of recent times includes the return of the Parish Community Playgroup.

The Ark is listed as a significant place within the City of Manningham Planning Scheme and protected under a heritage overlay. This is facilitated by the Conservation Management Plan which in 2017 allowed for further funding for ongoing maintenance. It was noted by the Architect that "it continues to be a well-used and well-loved building....a water tight community facility and an intact and well preserved heritage place within the municipality"

The challenges remain to continue to work within the Conservation Management Plan (2000) which recognizes its historical community significance. This is facilitated by communication between Parish and School ensuring appropriate use and ongoing maintenance

Baptism preparation is one of the most important outreach activities of the parish. Young couples who have frequently been away from the church for years bring their children for baptism. At our preparation meetings we try to help them understand the meaning of baptism and the blessings from belonging to a loving parish worshipping community. It is a very enjoyable ministry. The young parents are a delight. They are very happy to receive a warm welcome and we have a wonderful opportunity to share our faith as we reach out to them.

Baptisms are conducted every second Sunday at 1230 in the chapel at St Anne's. Father celebrates baptisms at Holy Spirit on the alternate weeks. Most months on the first Wednesday at 730pm there is a baptism preparation meeting usually for one or two families. The children are welcomed into the parish at a Sunday mass usually 2 weeks before their baptism and receive a plain white satin stole as a gift from our parish.

Since COVID, our Baptism numbers are at a low compared to a few years ago. It's hard to say why. Now as in the past the number of baptisms doesn't seem to grow families attending mass. In many cases we don't see the families again, or not until their child is of school age.

Perhaps a majority of our baptisms are for families not part of the parish or living in the local community. Many of the children baptized belong to ex St Anne's students not living in the area. When it is time to baptize their baby they come to us, drawn by nostalgia for our parish and our beautiful chapel. Some who bring children for baptism are relatives of ex parishioners or are related to someone who had their baby baptized in our chapel. We ask them to get permission from their local parish for us to do the baptism as making a connection to their local parish is probably more beneficial for them in the long run.

Play Group:**Ellen Holmes**

It is nearly 2 years since Shireen and I have been coordinating the playgroup. Most of the children are from school families.

We have free play and morning tea, a little music, hopefully a story and occasionally a simple craft activity every Wednesday from 9 till 11 in the Ark, a beautiful child friendly space. Playgroup is very beneficial for children and mothers bringing people together for fun, friendship and support. It is an important experience for young preschool children assisting their socialization. In 2024 we have 4 new families who have just started a prep child at St Anne's. They replace the lovely children who have now graduated to Prep or to kinder.

We would love a few more helpers from the parish to join the fun - perhaps we could have a roster so that it wouldn't be every week. Age is no barrier- many of the friends I have made at the Mainly Music Anglican playgroups I attend with my grand daughters, Gigi and Ridhi are in their 70s and 80s. You can help serve morning tea, play with the littlies at play dough or help them with puzzles, chat with the mums. Through the playgroup we aim to befriend the young mums and children, building bridges from the parish to the young families in the school or area. Playgroup is an outreach, part of our mission.

You will need a working with children check. This is simple to obtain either on line or at the post office- we can help you with that!

When Sunday mass is celebrated at St Anne's - currently on the first Sundays of the month - we can offer Children's Liturgy- provided there are children! When we have a school mass such as the Prep Welcome or a Commitment mass for children making their First Eucharist or their Confirmation we do have children at mass and so can run Children's Liturgy. However post COVID the numbers of children attending mass on these occasions is much fewer than in the past. It's baffling! Often one parent will come with the child but no siblings! We must carefully examine our invitation for the Eucharist commitment in May to emphasize that the whole family is invited.

For the past 2 years the Prep Welcome mass has had disappointing attendance by school families, due to the start of school being a matter of days before the 1st Sunday in February. This year we tried to give good advance notice in late November and a Christmas email but really with Christmas and holiday plans and the excitement of preparing the children to start school few families remembered to keep the date free.

If we continue to only have mass at St Anne's on the first Sunday of the month we run into difficulties scheduling school masses, as June and November have public holidays, September has Father's day and the school holidays in April, July and October coincide with the 1st Sunday of the month so last year we had the Grade 1/2 mass in the first week of December- not surprisingly it was poorly attended.

Children's liturgy was introduced many years ago in parishes to attract more families with young children to attend Sunday mass by making the mass experience more enjoyable for children. I have been involved over many years and have observed that the dwindling numbers of children and young families at mass pre-dates COVID. In ordinary times we are all aware that we are almost a child free parish now (except for our one favourite family of course!) Unless we have a baptism welcome. Today the parish miss the young families and their children! We yearn to find a solution to this problem! P.S. We aren't the only parish with this challenge of course.

Market Stalls:**Elaine Macpherson**

The Market Stall is an opportunity for the community to connect and engage with each other socially. It has been a financial success because community members have created goods, donated items and given freely of their time. The Christmas Market was a bustling event and raised over \$700, the Easter Market was a happy get together raising over \$300.

The Trading Table at the back of St Gerard's was a community initiative one year ago and has become a place to bring brick a brace, excess garden produce, baked goods, plants, toys and books to be sold to raise funds for the Missions and other causes. Carmel Impact has been donated \$105 three times, totalling \$315, for their work in Timor-Leste. The Columbian Mission has been donated \$100, two times, a total of \$200 for their charity work.

Suggestions for funds to go to other organisations are welcome.

The Power Club – Park Orchards Warrandyte Early Retirees:**Social Club**

The principal aim of the Group is to provide a forum for parishioners to engage in social activities and to engender a spirit of cooperation and support within the older members of the Parish community. Notifications for any future activities can be aptly notified in the Parish Bulletin.