



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SANDHURST

YEAR IN REVIEW 2020



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Diocese of Sandhurst acknowledges all Nations within our land and Diocese of Sandhurst.

We acknowledge the people of the North Eastern regions of our Diocese, Djilmathang, Minjambuta, Duduroa, Waywurru.

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

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

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 and present and honour their contributions and commit to actively working alongside First Nations people for healing, reconciliation and justice.

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OUR ORGANISATION

93,000+ Catholics in the region

40 Parishes

48 Clergy

10 Religious Congregations

45 Religious

3013 Employees

220 Diocesan Development Fund Account Holders

1 Hospital

4 Homes for Aged

56 Schools

19,401 Students

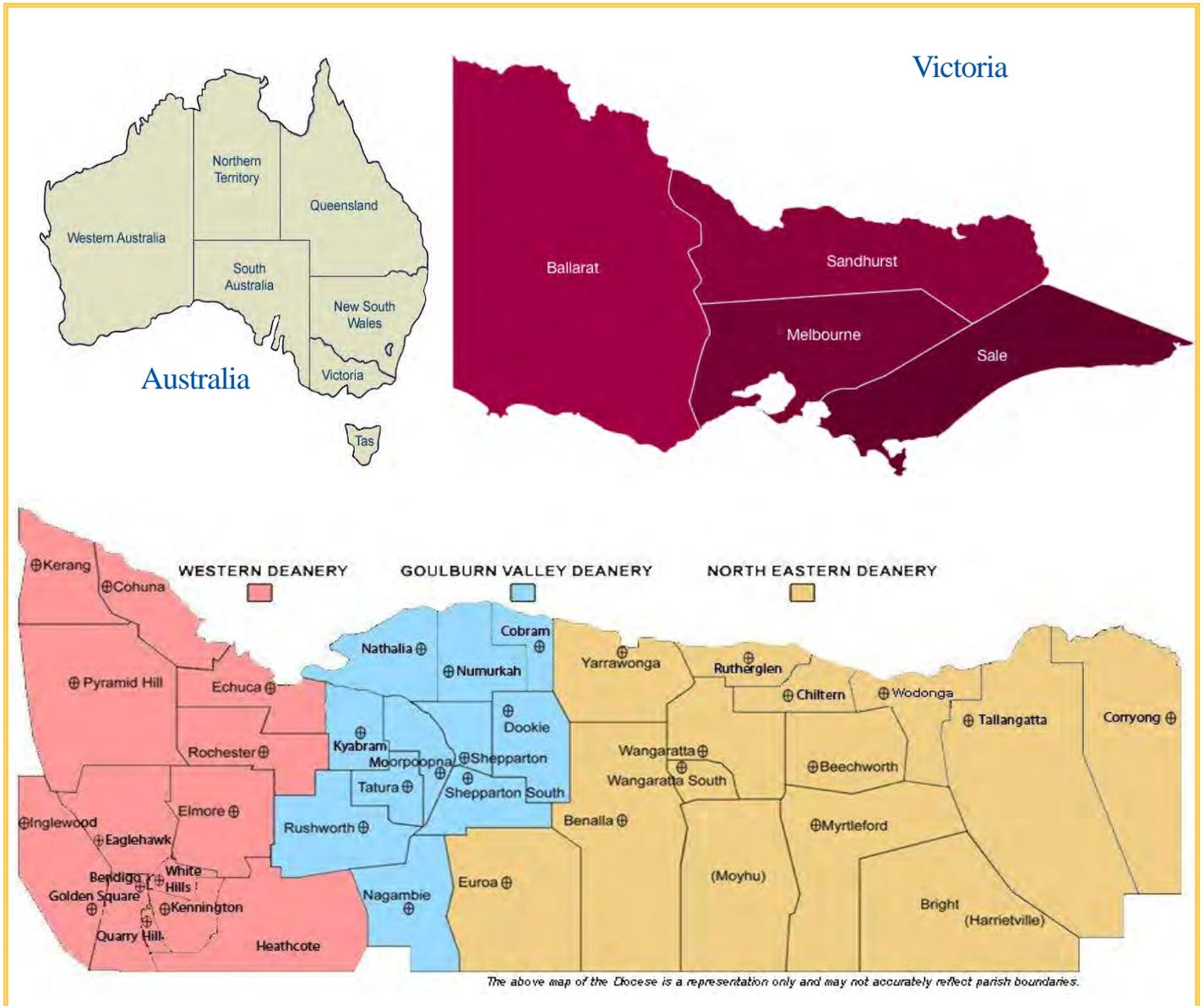
MINISTRIES OF THE DIOCESAN CHURCH

- Bishop's Office
- Diocesan Archives
- Vocations Ministry
- Social Justice Committee
- Marriage Preparation
- Roman Catholic Trusts Corporation for the Diocese of Sandhurst
- Sacred Music
- Clergy Health and Wellbeing
- Sandhurst Catholic Education Council
- Youth Ministry
- Priests' Retirement Foundation
- Finance Office
- Marriage Tribunal
- Media and Communications Office
- Adult Faith Education
- Catholic Education Office
- 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
- Safeguarding Committee
- Plenary Council Committee
- Sandpiper and e-News

PARISH MINISTRIES

- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
- Pastoral Associates Network
- Baptism Preparation
- Sacramental Programs
- Marriage Preparation Outreach
- Bereavement Ministry
- Catholic Women's League
- Knights of the Southern Cross
- Youth Ministry Groups
- Legion of Mary
- Special Religious Education (SRE)
- Children's Liturgy of the Word
- Child Safety Officers
- Faith Formation
- Anointing Mass
- Communion to the Sick and Aged
- Home Visitation Groups
- St Vincent de Paul Conferences
- Hospitality, Catering and Welcoming Groups
- MenALIVE
- 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 of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction
- Lenten and Advent Groups
- E-conferences
- Spirituality in the Pub
- Divine Will
- Catholic Charismatic Renewal

THE DIOCESE



The territory of the Diocese of Sandhurst was excised from the Diocese of Melbourne and erected as a diocese in 1874. When the ecclesiastical Province of Melbourne was established in 1887 it became a suffragan diocese of the Metropolitan See of Melbourne. Its geographical area is 45,196 square kilometres.

The diocese has 40 parishes organised into 3 deaneries.

Our Diocese's vision is 'that every person's heart be inflamed by the love of God'.

We welcome all who would like to join our communities or be guided by the principles and teachings of Christ.



BISHOP'S MESSAGE

“We can look back with thanks for the work of the Holy Spirit amongst us over the last year, and for so many signs of the adaptability, resilience and faith of the people in our communities.”

In March 2020, I joined the other Victorian bishops in making an announcement none of us had ever anticipated: that our churches would be closed and public liturgies would be suspended. That continued to be the situation throughout most of the year, as we went in and out of lockdown, with gradually easing restrictions through spring and early summer. Eventually, by Christmas, we were able to gather in large numbers again, though with many more outdoor Christmas Masses than usual.

For all of us, our experience of the coronavirus pandemic was the defining context of life in 2020. We have learnt that all our arrangements are provisional, with new restrictions possible at any time. Completing the vaccination rollout will take many months and a return to overseas travel is looking increasingly remote. The economic impact on businesses and families has been dramatic, both here in Australia and even more so in other parts of the world, including places where many priests and people in the Diocese have close connections to family and friends.

This has presented an extraordinary challenge for us, especially with so many months where we were unable to gather or connect with others as we would want to. We have had to become flexible and creative in developing new ways of praying – and also of working, schooling, socialising, exercising and shopping.

Early on in lockdown we were reminded that, while our church doors were shut, the Church itself never closes. This reflects a profound theological truth: the Church is not limited to any particular gathering or building. The Church is founded by Jesus and unites people from all times and places, who are led by him as the head of the body, animated by the Holy Spirit and gathered around the Father.

In another sense which is much more concrete and much closer to home, the Church of this Diocese remained open. Although we were forced to close Church doors, the life of our Diocesan Church and our parish communities continued. Throughout 2020, I have been encouraged and inspired by the efforts and adaptability of communities throughout the Diocese, who have shown great commitment and resilience in expressing and nourishing our Christian identity and mission as God's Church.

This commitment has happened liturgically, through online and outdoor Masses, prayers, meditations, faith sharing and video reflections. It has also happened practically, through phone calls; systems for notice sheet drop-off and email; care for the isolated and those in need; help with shopping and online parish meetings.



Despite the challenges of 2020, we have continued to pursue the mission entrusted to us. This is clear in the welcome extended in our parishes to those enquiring about joining the Catholic Church. It is evident too in the contributions made by many to the review of the strategic, consultative and administrative structures of the Diocese, which led to the Go Forth report, including recommendations for establishing a Diocesan Pastoral Council and appointing a Director of Mission and Pastoral Life.

Other significant developments in mechanisms for broader sharing in governance and decision-making responsibilities have happened in 2020 through the establishment of three new companies: Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd to take responsibility for the schools of the Diocese, Sandhurst Catholic Early Childhood Education and Care to operate and develop kindergartens, and CatholicCare Victoria to bring together the social service agencies of the four dioceses of Victoria. The contribution of those who worked towards the establishment of these companies, and the calibre of their new boards, can give us great confidence that our mission in schools, early learning settings and social services is in good hands.

There are many ways in which we might be tempted to ‘shake the dust from our sandals’ as we move on from 2020. However, we can also look back with thanks for the work of the Holy Spirit amongst us over the last year, and for so many signs of the adaptability, resilience and faith of the people in our communities.



Most Rev. Shane Mackinlay DD PhD

Bishop of Sandhurst



“I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their hard work and support of each other during a year of challenge and change. I am enormously proud of the people of our Diocese.”

BUSINESS MANAGER’S REPORT

I am quietly confident that in years to come, historians will deem 2020 a pivotal year for the activation of global civil society and the Catholic Church in Australia. 2020 was an extraordinary year for us, at first glance characterised by the global pandemic, the bushfire crisis, and the Black Lives Matter movement. In the Diocese of Sandhurst, we worked hard towards fundamental shifts in the way we manage, govern and care for people in our parish, school and work communities. In that sense, 2020 was a watershed year in which we laid a strong foundation for the future mission of the Diocese.

2020 saw the completion of significant projects:

- The review of the strategic, consultative and administrative structures of the Diocese, which took into account the observations and suggestions of targeted and invested clergy, pastoral associates, board members and leaders of the Diocese, and built on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the recommendations of the Light from the Southern Cross report.
- The creation of two new incorporated entities, Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd to oversee the governance of Catholic schools in the Diocese, and Sandhurst Early Childhood Education and Care Ltd, to oversee the provision of pre-school education and care to meet an identified growing demand.
- The merger of CatholicCare Sandhurst into a new state-wide entity, CatholicCare Victoria.

Throughout 2020 people in our parishes continued to participate in Plenary Council forums and sessions, supported by the Sandhurst Plenary Committee, diocesan Adult Faith Education and Sandhurst Youth Ministry.

2020 was a year dominated by change and new work activity. During government COVID-19 restrictions, we overcame new challenges; finding ways to work from home; keeping in touch and continuing to pray and worship. Our priests, parish secretaries and chancery team worked tirelessly to keep us connected, establish COVID-safe plans, and ensure the financial viability of parishes throughout lockdown. Parish secretaries met online to share their newfound high-tech methods for parishioners to make a booking for Mass; to implement the state required use of QR codes and low-tech solutions, such as checking in with parishioners by phone; while the Chancery Finance department navigated the maze of JobKeeper documentation.

The challenges of lockdown did not hinder the progress of diocesan projects. The good works of the Diocesan Development Fund continued with strong loan growth to undertake capital works. Loans totalling \$9.3m were approved during the calendar year. We have been assisting parishes to purchase new land for school expansion in growth areas such as Echuca and Huntly and have looked to consolidate land which is under-utilised or could be repurposed to meet community need. For example, social housing in Mooroopna or a residential land subdivision in Numurkah.

At Sacred Heart Cathedral, important upgrade works were completed on the fire detection systems, roof and guttering repairs and a new LED light installed at the top of the spire. Those fortunate to scale the 86 metres to the top of the spire wonder if there could be a way to make access safe and accessible for all, as it would be a tremendous attraction.

We anticipate that the Sandhurst Crest subdivision will benefit from the Victorian lockdown as there is now growing recognition of the great lifestyle regional Victoria affords, driven by new acceptance of working remotely and government initiatives to support migration to the regions during the pandemic. We expect that all lots of the final subdivision of Sandhurst Crest will be sold in the first half of 2021.

Throughout the year there has been continued interest in the Diocesan Archives from those seeking to contribute material and those seeking to draw on the collection. The research phase of the Faith of the Goldfields linkage grant, in partnership with the Aspire Foundation, City of Greater Bendigo and La Trobe University, was completed in 2020 and will conclude in 2021. It will provide an interesting window into the early days of the Diocese and people of the 1850s.

Reflecting on the past year, in which we were humbled by circumstances beyond our control, yet forged a strong foundation for the future of the Diocese, I am reminded of the Romero Prayer*, and I quote an excerpt here:



The Chancery, Bendigo

*We lay foundations that will need further development.
 We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.
 We cannot do everything,
 And there is a sense of liberation in realising that.
 This enables us to do something,
 and to do it very well.
 It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
 an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.
 We may never see the end results,
 but that is the difference between the master builder and the
 worker.
 We are workers not master builders;
 Ministers, not messiahs.
 We are prophets of a future that is not our own.*

*written in 1979 by Most Rev. Ken Untener, the late Bishop of Saginaw, Michigan.

We should all feel a great sense of achievement as we look back on the past year. We have kept our faith and supported one another whilst juggling our work and personal lives in difficult circumstances.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their hard work and support of each other during a year of challenge and change.

I am enormously proud of the people of our Diocese.

Mr Cameron Fraser
 Business Manager
 Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst



“Homage must be paid to those Priests and parishioners who did so much to ensure the families of our Diocese enjoyed an affordable, robust system of learning and pastoral care.”

DIRECTOR OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION’S REPORT

The history of Catholic schools within the Diocese of Sandhurst spans 167 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. Sandhurst Catholic schools are part of a long tradition of Catholic education in Australia. 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.

For many reasons, parents choose Catholic schooling for their children in ever-increasing numbers. These reasons most likely include an education in the Faith, tradition, quality curriculum and opportunities, skilled educators, structure and many others.

As 2020 commenced, some of our communities experienced the threat of the most destructive bushfires in the nation’s history. Corryong, Myrtleford, Tallangatta and Wodonga were on high alert as schools prepared to open for Term 1. As is always the case in the face of recovery from such an emergency, ensuring children could go to school was a priority of the authorities and most certainly, of Catholic Education Sandhurst.

March saw the Nation, and indeed the world, enter a remarkable period as the impact of COVID-19 hit. In March, schools were closed across Victoria and students undertook their learning remotely. With very little notice, Sandhurst educators developed programs that could be delivered online or via hard copy, while teachers and parents were called upon to work together to ensure no child was ‘left behind’ and that good learning 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. What could have been a disaster, proved to be manageable.

By State Government edict, the three unincorporated Victorian Catholic education systems – Sandhurst, Ballarat and Melbourne were to develop and implement new governance models by 1 January 2021. For more than sixteen decades, canonical administration of Catholic schools had been in the hands of the Parish Priest. Bishop Mackinlay established a working party, comprised of expert stakeholders from across the country, to explore the most suitable model for the Diocese of Sandhurst. In little more than 12 months,

a proposed new model was submitted to the Bishop and then to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority. A company limited by guarantee was formed to oversee the delivery of education in all diocesan primary and secondary environments – Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited.

An era which had witnessed the extraordinary growth in the number and quality of educational environments, had come to an end. Homage must be paid to those Priests and parishioners who did so much to ensure the families of the Diocese of Sandhurst enjoyed an affordable, robust system of learning and pastoral care. The lives enhanced by their deep commitment to the education of our young can never be measured.

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

Across the Diocese, more than 19,300 boys and girls are enrolled in our forty-two primary schools and fourteen secondary colleges, which include three specialist settings. 9,540 children attend our Primary Schools and 9,761 are in our Secondary Colleges and three Specialist Settings. We continue to cater for the educational needs of all families who seek our support, from the smallest school in St Patrick’s Primary School in Pyramid Hill (16 students), to our largest in Notre Dame College in Shepparton (1,655 students).

Throughout 2020, we worked closely with Catholic Services Victoria (formerly CatholicCare) and personnel from the Diocese of Sandhurst to develop a pathway towards a broader introduction of Early Childhood Learning and Care. With the support of the Victorian State Government, Sandhurst will soon see a greater number of kindergartens and early childhood care facilities in our Primary Schools.



In July, Bishop Shane Mackinlay and Mr Paul Desmond announced the Bishop Shane's acceptance of the recommendations of the Catholic Schools Governance Working Party.

This initiative has the specific aim of supporting parents and offering quality learning prior to enrolment at school.

The Sandhurst Catholic Education Council has been the principal consultative and advisory body in matters concerning education in the Sandhurst Diocese. Under the leadership of the Episcopal Vicar for Education, the Very Reverend Dr Brian Boyle, the Council's role in bringing to life the mission of Catholic education is enlivened by the deep desire to provide the very best in learning experiences for our young. As we look to the future, this Council has concluded its service to Sandhurst, and I commend all who have so faithfully served education via membership.

Similarly, the Catholic Education Office is an entity committed to the best in educational opportunities and outcomes for the students entrusted to our schools. In our 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 not simply a profession, but also an attitude, a way of being. Our Catholicity and our relationship with God remains central to our work. We look to a service model, where all persons are valued and empowered to be their best. We have worked to be faithful to a model based on the guiding principles of Mission, Stewardship, Dialogue, Subsidiarity and Co-responsibility. Excellence, equity and evangelisation are what we strive to provide for every student.

Catholic Education is proudly one key player in the life of the Church in Sandhurst. We see the school as the focus of all our aspirations. It is our goal to support Sandhurst schools as they improve young lives, developing in each a sense of purpose and hope, nurturing a belief in the future and their role within it. Those who graduate from Sandhurst Catholic schools should carry with them a lifelong commitment to improving the lives of others and a desire to leave the world a better place.

As educators, we believed this focus would serve to remind us daily that our Ministry within the Faith must always be dynamic, outward-looking, ever ready to serve, to challenge, to uplift, to enhance and to improve. With Christ at the heart of our work, we could then be faithful to the core business of learning and teaching, while anchored by the rich teachings of the Catholic Faith.

We remain grateful to both the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments for their generous financial support of the Catholic Sector. By their provision of funds, we are able to set and work towards our target of delivering the best in learning opportunities for our students.

Mr Paul Desmond

Director of Catholic Education
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst



“We are moving from strength to strength!”

CATHOLIC CARE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

As many have said before me, this has been a year like no other. Along with the most difficult circumstances we as a country, a state and as local communities have experienced for many generations, there have also been some high points.

The bushfires in north-eastern Victoria which ushered in 2020, caused great distress and disruption across towns and communities in that region, which fall within our Sandhurst Diocese. This gave us a particular responsibility to do what we could to support recovery, in a way that was informed by those communities. With financial assistance from Catholic Emergency Relief Australia, we focused on the recovery of children through the ‘Stormbirds’ program; we worked with local schools in a train-the-trainer model to support young people’s wellbeing following loss and grief experiences from natural disasters. The program enables children and young people to share their experiences of loss and change in safe and creative ways, to understand and attend to their feelings, and learn skills for adapting and recovering. This work has been very well received.

With the onset of COVID-19 restrictions in March 2020, life changed for all of us. As staff, we migrated to the new experience of service delivery from our homes. Equipping all staff with the necessary equipment and training to deliver services and administration remotely was a big challenge over several months. This investment and training will have a continuing legacy, as online delivery will remain a part of our suite of services for people who prefer to engage this way; or for whom this form of access provides opportunities which did not previously exist.

Another major commitment has been our engagement in the development of Sandhurst Catholic Early Childhood Education and Care, a partnership with Catholic Education Sandhurst and the Diocese, to establish a model of early childhood education and care which draws on the strengths of each partner. We are looking forward to our continuing role in this new venture and all the benefits which will increasingly be available to local families and communities as a result.

Across this period, we have continued to actively participate in our national and state peak bodies: Family Relationships Services Australia (FRSA); Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA); and Catholic Social Services Victoria (CSSV). Each of these bodies has an important

role to play in supporting our sector as we deliver a broad range of programs to people who are struggling or disadvantaged, keeping in front of governments the key issues which impact our services and the people we assist.

A very significant piece of research and advocacy was undertaken by FRSA this past year, to address a ‘funding cliff’ for community services which would see the sector’s capacity cut by 20% if it was not addressed. Fortunately, this work resulted in a financial adjustment in the federal budget which has averted this crisis.

Through CSSA, in collaboration with the Australian National University, we participated in an exciting research project ‘Mapping the Potential’, a project to understand the drivers of persistent community disadvantage across electorates in our regions. The project has delivered rich data, with the ultimate goal of informing and supporting community-led responses to community needs, so that we can work to build the potential within our local communities. CCS looks forward to our continuing role in the application of this research.

CSSV and CSSA combined to hold a major national conference in February, ‘Serving Communities with Courage and Compassion’ which drew together many inspiring speakers and participants from academic, policy and coalface environments. The presentations included models of courageous and compassionate service and mission at the margins; implementing child safety; eco-justice; addressing homelessness; best practice in governance; and fostering emerging leaders. As it turned out, the timing was very fortuitous, with freedom of gathering before the impact of COVID-19 set in.

In addition to these significant developments, our ‘business as usual’ commitments have continued. Our Sanctuary Model has proven to be a valuable tool for supporting staff during this time of physical separation from the workplace. We have continued to develop and engage with Reconciliation Action, Child Safety, Gender Equity and Quality improvement. It was pleasing to have a positive report at our mid-cycle audit.

We have enjoyed our ongoing work with many partner organisations across our regions, within the limits of pandemic restrictions. Of note is our service delivery partnership with MacKillop Family Services, with whom we deliver ‘Cradle



Ms Rhonda Lawson-Street and Bishop Shane Mackinlay announced the merger of CatholicCare Sandhurst, CatholicCare Melbourne/Sale and CentaCare Ballarat on 29 October.

to Kinder’ and, more recently, the ‘Family Preservation and Reunification program’. Both of these programs are strongly evidence-based and supported by robust research and evaluation, which is so important when we are dealing with people living in the most disadvantaged and complex circumstances. Beyond the local level, CatholicCare Victoria Tasmania has continued to provide a strong platform for our Commonwealth-funded family and relationships programs, with high levels of cooperation between the participating agencies and valuable aggregation of service data.

Since welcoming the new Bishop of Sandhurst in October 2019, I have appreciated Bishop Shane’s supportive leadership, vision and strong grasp of governance. Throughout this period, one of his responsibilities has been to work with the CCS Board on the incorporation of the organisation,

in accordance with the state government’s funding requirements.

As you will have noted from the Bishop’s Message and the Chair’s Report, our incorporation is now being accomplished by a major organisational transformation as we merge with sister organisations to become a new company, CatholicCare Victoria.

This has been both a challenging and exciting process as we worked towards the date of 1 January 2021 for commencement of the new company. The model we have embraced, of a locally-oriented and decentralised structure, provides assurance that we will proceed with ‘unity in diversity’ across the state, in a way which preserves our local character and commitments.

This Report is now an historic piece, the last for CatholicCare Sandhurst. It has been a privilege to lead the dedicated staff of this organisation over the past two years; and now into our new future. My sincere thanks and appreciation go to CatholicCare Sandhurst staff, our Board, and to Bishop Shane and staff of the Diocese of Sandhurst.

We are moving from strength to strength!

Ms Rhonda Lawson-Street

Executive Director of CatholicCare
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

2595 Clients
11,044 Sessions
60 Staff

Main offices in Bendigo,
Shepparton
Echuca.

Outreach offices in Wedderburn,
Wodonga
Wangaratta
Mildura
Seymour.

GO FORTH: A REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC, CONSULTATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES OF THE DIOCESE OF SANDHURST

In May 2020, Bishop Mackinlay engaged Mr Francis Moore, former Executive Director Administration of the Archdiocese of Melbourne and former Director and Deputy Chair of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, to conduct a review of the Diocese. Mr Moore was commissioned to:

- assess the effectiveness of the structure and processes of each of the current consultative bodies of the Diocese of Sandhurst;
- identify principles, structures, practices and processes to achieve best practice in diocesan governance that would enable the Bishop and the Diocese to operate in a strategic and collaborative way, drawing on the best possible advice of lay people and clergy for the delivery of the Church's mission; and
- recommend any changes that would ensure the administrative structures of the Diocese are effective and appropriate to support the proposed consultative and strategic structures and processes.

The review was underpinned by the call of Pope Francis to make Church structures “more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 27).

The review was set against a background of heightened focus on Church governance and leadership arising from recommendations to the Catholic Church of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Catholic Church's response to these recommendations, and preparations for the Australian Plenary Council.

Despite COVID-19 restrictions, 33 clergy, 13 pastoral associates, six agency leaders, four seminarians and three Diocesan Finance Council members from all deaneries of the Diocese took part in a targeted consultation process, which included focus groups, individual interviews and questionnaires. The consultation was undertaken by Mr Moore with the assistance of Ms Cathy Jenkins, Assistant to the Director: Leadership Development, Catholic Education Sandhurst.

In December 2020, the review's report was published. Entitled 'Go Forth', it evoked *Evangelii Gaudium* and Jesus' concluding commission to his disciples in Matthew's gospel: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Mt28:19). Mr Moore commented that:

In undertaking this review and for those considering this report and its recommendations the call of Pope Francis is ‘to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelisation ... to not walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters ... in a wise and realistic pastoral discernment’ (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 33).”

Mr Moore identified eleven key opportunities and made 56 recommendations to assist the Diocese in building up a more vital, dynamic, mission-focused and participatory church culture, with a focus on stewardship, subsidiarity and transparency.

Bishop Shane Mackinlay welcomed the report and thanked all those who had contributed to it:

“I particularly appreciate the clarity and practicality of its recommendations. It will provide invaluable assistance in planning how we focus and direct our activities and efforts in the years ahead ... I am very grateful to all those who contributed to this consultation, and particularly grateful to Francis and Cathy for the conversations and reflection that they facilitated. Many people have commented to me about their appreciation of the opportunity to participate in this project.”

In February 2021, Bishop Shane issued a formal response to the report, accepting all its recommendations and committing himself to their implementation.

Summary of Key Recommendations of the report.

That a Diocesan Pastoral Council, to be named the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council representative of the diversity of people of the Diocese, be established.

That the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council lead a process of consultation and discernment to see whether the current vision statement reflects the aspiration of the Diocese for itself.

That a new role of Director of Mission and Pastoral Life, reporting to the Bishop, be created.

That the Council of Priests be constituted by all the priests of the Diocese holding a current appointment.

That not less than two and not more than four lay persons, appointed by the Bishop, attend meetings of the College of Consultors as advisors and participants with a right to participate in discussions.

That a digest summarising the matters discussed at meetings of the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council, the College of Consultors and the Council of Priests be made available widely across the Diocese, on the model established already for the College of Consultors.

That the Bishop initiate an independent review in three years of the effectiveness of the recommendations.

To read a complete list of recommendations, please read the full Report which can be found on the diocesan website.





“Clergy have been overwhelmingly positive in their leadership in child protection activities ... The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst is dedicating significant resources to reform in order to apply best practice to prevent child abuse.”

CHILD PROTECTION

AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst embraced the necessity of compliance with the 7 Child Safe Standards of the Victorian Commission for Children and Young People, following government recommendations to comply with the standards, effective from 1 January 2017.

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) incorporating the principles of the Victorian Commission for Children and Young People's *7 Child Safe Standards* and expanding them to include recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) are in the process of being extended (2nd edition) to incorporate safeguarding requirements for adults.

CPSL is now transitioning into the new national body for safeguarding. CPSL operated alongside other agencies which provided support and services on a number of other elements of professional standards and safeguarding systems at a national level. It became apparent that there was a need for one national agency incorporating CPSL, the Australian Catholic Centre for Professional Standards (ACCPS) and oversight of the Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR). The new agency is called Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL) and represents an evolution of safeguarding in the Church. During the transition period all services offered by the previous bodies will continue as planned.

I was engaged as the Child Safety Coordinator of the Diocese in February 2017 to ensure that the Diocese and parishes have policies, procedures, risk assessments and training in place to comply with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS). Most parishes have an active Child Safe Team dedicated to child safety and to assist the parish priest in complying with the safeguarding standards. The Child Safety Co-Ordinator has been visiting parishes over the past few years providing assistance and resources to parishes to

help comply with the standards. The Diocese provides online safeguarding training courses for all parishes to assist with the training requirements of the NCSS.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the visitations to parishes have been stopped and communication has been via email and telephone. The opportunity was taken in this period to ask parishes to nominate volunteers to take part in the Essentials of Safeguarding online training as face-to-face training was not allowed, due to COVID-19 restrictions. The diocesan safeguarding policies and parish information have been updated on the Diocesan website and notified to parishes.

Clergy 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. The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst is dedicating significant resources to reform in order to apply best practice to prevent child abuse.

Audit of the Diocese by CPSL

In late 2020 a substantial audit of the Diocese was undertaken by a group called *Catholic Professional Standards Limited* (CPSL). This group undertook a comprehensive audit of the safeguarding policies and practices of the Diocese, measured against the *7 Child Safe Standards* of the Victorian Government and the *10 Child Safe National Catholic Safeguarding Standards*. This report will be a public document, available on the CPSL website.

Ms Anne McIntosh

Safeguarding Coordinator
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst



‘PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST’

‘Putting Children First’ as the theme for Child Protection Sunday in 2020. “This annual celebration of our children is a reminder to all of us to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children in every aspect of church and community life,” said Fr Brian Boyle, Chair of the diocesan Professional Standards Committee. “The protection of children and vulnerable adults is very much a priority and commitment of every local Catholic parish and agency in the Diocese ... We are all responsible for our precious children and the vulnerable adults in our midst,” he said.

The diocesan Safeguarding Committee meets regularly to advise the Bishop on Safeguarding matters and to ensure the Diocese provides the best environment possible for children and vulnerable adults. In 2020 the Committee completed a substantial review of diocesan and parish safeguarding policies and practices.

In every Church of the Diocese a person can easily find a series of posters and policy statements relating to Safeguarding issues. Parish Safeguarding Committees work with their local priest and the diocesan Child Safety Officer to ensure compliance with safeguarding policies.

“The recent Royal Commission laid bare the appalling level of abuse, of cover-up and neglected responsibilities in the Australian Catholic Church. As submissions to the Plenary Council have also made clear, many people feel hurt, angry and betrayed. Voices are calling for greater accountability and transparency in Church life. Specifically, these voices call for responsibility on the part of Church leaders for those persons whose lives have been broken by abuse; for recognition of the hurt and betrayal felt by those wounded by abuse; and recognition of the devastating trauma abuse has caused, not only for victims but for their wider families. The Sandhurst Diocese has a zero tolerance for child abuse,” said Fr Boyle.

“As we celebrate our children, it is clear what they need: safety, love, freedom from harm, joy, freedom to play, and a safe environment. Children have the right to speak and to be heard. Children have the right to be empowered. What we want is to nurture, protect, inspire, and teach every child and for every child to reach their full potential,” said Fr Boyle.

“We want to nurture, protect, inspire and teach every child.”

Very Rev. Brian Boyle



‘LIGHT FROM THE SOUTHERN CROSS’ REPORT

In August 2020, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia published a comprehensive study of the practices and possibilities for diocesan and parish governance and management. Commissioned in response to recommendations of the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (December 2017), the study was undertaken by the implementation Advisory Group, made up of local and international experts.

The Report included 86 recommendations of its own, which have widely been accepted as ‘doable’ and can be implemented at a parish level. Bishop Shane Mackinlay said

Many of these recommendations will be significant nationally and will be a valuable contribution to the ongoing discernment during our preparation for the Plenary Council.

PLENARY 2020 CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

The COVID-19 restrictions of 2020 created a set of challenges for the Sandhurst Plenary Council Committee. The postponement of the first National Assembly originally scheduled for October 2021, combined with restrictions on Mass and gatherings, threatened the enthusiasm and traction on preparation for the Plenary Council.

Nevertheless, Chair of the Sandhurst Plenary Council Committee (SPCC), Fr Brian Boyle EV said there was also an up-side to the restrictions and delay which led to an extended period of Phase 2, the Listening and Discernment phase of plenary preparations, describing it as “a graced opportunity.”

The SPCC prepared and implemented a strategy focusing on deepening practices of discernment to “keep the Plenary Spirit alive.” This included live-streamed Zoom sessions, each focusing on one of the six thematic papers prepared by the National Plenary Committee, from the concerns which had emerged from the consultation of Catholics across the country in Phase 1.

Phase 1: Listening and Dialogue was launched on Pentecost Sunday (May 2018) and closed on Ash Wednesday (March 2019). The final (national) report for Phase 1 was released by the National Centre for Pastoral Research (NCPR) in July 2019. Nationally, some 15,000 participants made 17,457 submissions. The report listed six themes derived from the key issues raised by participants in their submissions. These six themes formed the basis for further listening and discernment in Phase 2.

In November 2019, the NCPR released the Phase 1 Final Report for the Diocese of Sandhurst. This report analysed the 305 Sandhurst responses and included anecdotal quotes from submissions. There were 102 group submissions representing 4082 individuals, many of them high school students. There were 203 individual submissions, 57% of them from women, and the bulk of them from people over the age of 55.

Using data from the NCPR’s Sandhurst Report, Fr Brian Boyle and Sandhurst Plenary member, Ms Ruth Lawlor wrote, “Please Change: What Sandhurst Catholics said about Plenary Council Phase 1: Listening and Dialogue.” They wrote, “The title was taken from one of the submissions in the Sandhurst Report. The title, we believe, picks up well the emotion many respondents indicated in their submission, namely a love for the Church on the one hand and a sincere desire, indeed the necessity, for the Church to change on the other hand. Many of the submissions in the Report reflect wisdom, passion, commitment and hope for change while, at the same time, acknowledging this may well be the last opportunity for that change in the Australian Catholic Church.”

Catholics in Australia are keeping their faith in an increasingly secularised nation, in which scandals and stagnation have

broken hearts and crumbled faith in the institution of the Church itself. The Plenary Council provides us with an opportunity to listen, to be heard, to pray and reflect; and to focus on the core values of our Catholic faith as we work together towards a better Church and better future.

The Plenary Council is the highest level of gathering in the Church in Australia. Resolutions made at the Assemblies proceed to Rome for either adjustment, approval or rejection. This is why the Bishops of Australia and others have been calling for the Plenary sessions to be guided and filled with prayer with Christ at the centre. They need to be nourishing spiritual experiences for us to discern and create a pathway forward.

On 24 March, the Sandhurst Plenary delegates were announced:

Bishop Shane Mackinlay
Fr Joe Taylor PP, Vicar-General
Fr Brian Boyle, EV, Episcopal Vicar for Education
Ms Cathy Jenkins, Catholic Education Sandhurst
Ms Ruth Lawlor, Sandhurst Youth Ministry

The three clerics will attend by virtue of office, while Ms Jenkins and Ms Lawlor were appointed by a nomination and selection process.

On 21 May, the National Plenary Committee released a new logo, which included the words “Continuing the Journey” and announced new dates for the national Assemblies; Adelaide in October 2021 and Sydney in April 2022.

On Pentecost Sunday (31 May 2020), Thematic Papers, based on the reports of the Listening and Dialogue phase, were released. These papers formed the basis of the Listening and Discernment phase (Phase 2) of the plenary process.

[How is God Calling us to be a Christ-centred Church in Australia that is :](#)

[Missionary and Evangelising?](#)
[Inclusive Participatory and Synodal?](#)
[Prayerful and Eucharistic?](#)
[Humble, Healing and Merciful?](#)
[A Joyful, Hope-filled and Servant Community?](#)
[Open to Conversion, Renewal and Reform?](#)

In November and December, three Reflection Sessions were held online:

“**Discerning the Way to the Plenary Council**”
facilitated by Cathy Jenkins.

“**Inclusive, Participatory and Synodal**”
facilitated by Ruth Lawlor.

“**Humble, Healing and Merciful**”
facilitated by Lyn Breen.

“LISTEN TO WHAT THE SPIRIT IS SAYING”

In February Bishop Shane gave the Monsignor Peter Jeffrey Oration to Catholic Education leaders. In early March, he was the guest speaker at a ‘Spirituality In the Pub’ event, where he was asked, “Where are we headed as a diocese? As a church?”

At both events Bishop Shane spoke about the future of the Church in Australia, the passing of faith from one generation to the next, building trust through good governance and the Fifth Plenary Council.

“It seems to me that we are in something of a critical moment in Australia,” he said. “The parents of children in our schools come from a generation in whom their experience of faith is deeply ingrained through the regular practice of their childhood. Even though they might not engage with it regularly in the present, they have something like a muscle memory, so that they feel at home in Catholic Liturgy and describe themselves as Catholic without hesitation. Moreover, they want that sort of experience and connection for their children. In a context where so many people feel anger, hostility or indifference to the church, it’s both remarkable and inspiring how movingly parents talk about the experience of faith they want for their children when they present them for baptism,” he said.

Of the Fifth Plenary Council he said

People want this to work; people want to participate, and they still care deeply. In some ways, of course, that sort of investment makes the stakes even higher.

It’s very clear to me that there is widespread weariness and frustration with the Church, and especially with its leadership. Many have already walked away because they have given up waiting for us to ‘get it’. For others, the Plenary Council is the last chance. There is no question that the stakes are high.

While the process of preparation for the Plenary Council begins by inviting us to offer what we see, it asks us to do that in a spirit of service and generosity, where we then step back from it, step away and reflect on it alongside what others have seen, listening again and again for where God’s spirit might be calling us.

Discussing the Plenary process, Bishop Shane spoke of Pope Francis’ leadership style. “Pope Francis is an extraordinary example in terms of process ... he is in no rush to close off a conversation or resolve an issue. His preference seems to be to give hints as guidance to the conversation ...”

Pope Francis shows remarkable trust – both in the people of God who will be discussing these sorts of questions ... and more importantly in the Holy Spirit, whose voice we seek to hear and respond to as we continue to ‘Listen to what the Spirit is saying.’



18 February, Bishop Shane Mackinlay spoke to Catholic Education leaders.



2 March, 150 people attended the ‘Spirituality In the Pub’ event to listen to guest speaker Bishop Shane Mackinlay. “It was obvious from the numbers attending, and their applause, how appreciative people were to have their Bishop sharing his thoughts and listening to theirs,” said Ms Kerry Stone, one of the event organisers.



“Many of our liturgical and pastoral experiences in 2020 will in fact be the ‘new normal’ in the future.”

CLERGY LIFE AND MINISTRY REPORT

The COVID-19 pandemic which emerged in force in early 2020 had a significant impact on the liturgical and pastoral life of our parishes with its series of Government lockdowns. For our clergy these lockdowns brought issues of isolation and reduced physical contact with parishioners. Our priests needed to find ways to innovatively and imaginatively keep in contact with parishioners. Changes to lockdown regulations brought changes to the ways liturgy could be conducted and the not inconsiderable issue of the loss of parish income. In this context, this report offers an overview of the work of Clergy Life and Ministry with our priests in 2020.

One of the ways in which our priests stayed in contact with each other during 2020 was through a regular fortnightly online meeting, using Zoom. These online gatherings gave the priests the opportunity to pray together, to keep in touch, to discuss pastoral initiatives during the COVID-19 restrictions, and offer support. One of the highlights of these gatherings was the opportunity to interview the two ordinands at that time, DJ (Denib) Suguitan and Adi Indra, by Zoom, about their forthcoming ordinations to the priesthood. Adi connected with us in the early hours of a Roman morning!

One of the responsibilities of the Director of Clergy Life and Ministry is to regularly visit the priests in their own parishes, as a way of offering support and interest in their local ministries. During October 2020 I was able to visit some twelve priests in the North East Deanery. Priests appreciate the visits of fellow priests.

Following the Royal Commission, new arrangements for the governance and management of our Catholic schools are now in place. The Parish Priest is no longer the Canonical Administrator of the local primary and/or secondary Catholic school. While the priest no longer has a significant role in the management of the school, his role as the pastoral and spiritual leader has been enhanced in these new arrangements. Catholic schools in the Sandhurst Diocese are now under the governance of the new company Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd. In 2020 our priests participated in several forums organised by Catholic Education Sandhurst (CES) to consult with the clergy and to offer information about the new structures.

During 2020 I worked on a series of draft policies on the care of Sandhurst priests; specifically on the pastoral care of overseas priests ministering in our Diocese and on the care of

recently ordained priests. The Diocese offers a range of support structures including supervision, mentoring, and spiritual direction to support and assist priests in their ministry. One of these draft policies will address the pastoral care of all priests in the Diocese. Other policies will be more specific, addressing particular groups. The overseas priests ministering in Sandhurst are an increasingly important group in our Diocese and very welcome in our midst. The full suite of policies on the care of priests will be considered by the Sandhurst priests at their inservice in August 2021.

Like many other groups and individuals in 2020, our plans for an inservice for our clergy needed to be significantly revised because of the pandemic. Instead of gathering together as in previous years, in 2020 we ran the inservice over two days in August by Zoom. Despite the challenges, this method of presentation was enthusiastically adopted by our priests. Rev. Dr Jake Mudge, presented on the theme of Human Dimensions of Priestly Formation. Rev. Dr Kevin Lenehan (Master, Catholic Theological College) presented the theme of Discernment and Synodality. The August inservice was a good example of how forum and mode of presentation could be adapted to new and challenging situations.

Again, because of COVID-19 the annual meeting of Parish Priests and Pastoral Associates was conducted by Zoom in late July. Christine Sebire (Pastoral Associate, Echuca) chaired the meeting. We had the opportunity to reflect together on our own ministry during the pandemic in terms of challenges and opportunities to innovate. We reflected on how many of our liturgical and pastoral experiences in 2020 will in fact be the ‘new normal’ in the future.

The purpose of the Clergy Life and Ministry is to offer support, professional inservice, and care for the priests of the Diocese. The nature of that presbyterate is changing significantly with increasing numbers of Filipino and Indian priests ministering so effectively in the Diocese. Priests generally minister more effectively and with greater personal satisfaction when they minister together.

Very Rev. Dr Brian Boyle PP EV

Director of Clergy Life and Ministry

Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

JUBILARIANS



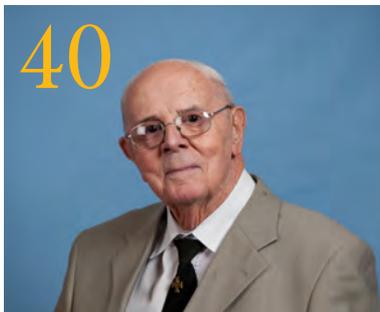
FR MIKE PULLAR

Fr Mike Pullar says his path to the priesthood was one familiar to many priests. Yet his fifty years as a priest has been every bit ‘the road less travelled’ – full of vibrant people, dramatic locations and adventure. Fr Pullar has celebrated Mass in the South Pole and the Middle East. He has lived in a hut amongst migrant workers of the Waitaki Hydro Power Station and has served as parish priest in some of New Zealand’s most rugged and remote mountain districts. Befriended by mountaineers, he became a mountaineer himself and spent many years as chaplain to the New Zealand Airforce and, later, the Australian Airforce. Fr Pullar says the priesthood is not an easy ride if you need a lot of affirmation, but that he would do it all again by the Grace of God, the blessing of his family and patience from both military and parish communities – and the Bishop!



FR ANDREW FEWINGS

“How can I express feelings of gratitude, hope and wonder in printed words? Being welcomed into the homes and lives of people often at the most significant times of their lives; the celebration of sacraments and pastoral ministry to the sick and bereaved are responsibilities that bring great joy and intensity of feelings. These days less people are attending Mass, but I’ve noticed that those who do attend are more faithful and more willing to volunteer and contribute to the church and Parish. I have found that adult faith formation and faith and life moments have contributed much to peoples’ experience of faith. As a priest I am caught up in this renewal and continual dialogue with others and find it very enriching. The profound off-centre questions of school children enrich, challenge and delight.”



FR PAUL PURCELL

Fr Paul says his calling to vocation was a gradual thing that built and built within him. A qualified boilermaker, he was a Dominican monk for almost three decades before he was ordained as a priest. He was awarded an MBE for his service to the people of the Solomon Islands, where for 25 years, he was the Captain of a missionary ship which he rebuilt himself. Fr Paul joined the Diocese of Sandhurst in 2001 and at the age of 95 still celebrates weekday Mass at St Kilian’s. “What people don’t realise is that I’ve never actually retired,” he said.



FR ROB GALEA

“I could never have imagined living the life I am now. An ordained priest for ten years and living across the globe from where I was born and raised, and now serving a global ministry in the regional Diocese of Sandhurst. I could not have ever imagined being this happy and fulfilled. I love being a priest and consider it the greatest honour. The last ten years have been full of blessings and struggles; all of which have been opportunities to love and trust the Lord Jesus more deeply. Please pray for me and for your priests as we continue to seek to serve Christ faithfully.”



FR NOVELITO LIM

“The first five years of priesthood are crucial to one’s journey as a priest,” said Bishop Dennis Villarojo when he ordained me five years ago in the Diocese of Malolos in the Philippines. I think those words ring true. The first five years of priesthood have been the crucial years of my vocation. They have moulded me to the priest that I am today; not perfect, but trying to do the best that I can for my parish communities. Priesthood, like any other calling in life has its ups and downs; and every day is a learning experience”.

“I realise now, more than ever, that life plans only work if, and only if, they are in sync with what God has willed for us.”

Rev. Fr DJ Sugitan



FR DJ SUGUITAN SANDHURST'S NEWEST AND YOUNGEST PRIEST

Fr Denib Josette (DJ) Suguitan, Sandhurst's newest and youngest priest, was ordained at Sacred Heart Cathedral in December 2020. He is now serving as Assistant Priest at the Cathedral Parish cluster.

Fr DJ is accustomed to trusting in God's plan for him and, after a year of challenges, realised that it was no coincidence that his Ordination to the priesthood fell on the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. "I realise now, more than ever, that life plans only work if, and only if, they are in sync with what God has willed for us," he wrote at the time of his Ordination. If there is one thing I've learned ... it is the fact that God never ceases to amaze us, as long as we let ourselves be amazed."

**"God never ceases to amaze us,
as long as we let ourselves
be amazed."**

At the start of 2020 Fr DJ was looking forward to his Ordination to the priesthood, which was planned to take place in July. Then, due to government enforced COVID-19 restrictions, his Ordination date was moved from July to September, before being postponed with no set date.

Finally on 12 December, Fr DJ was ordained to the priesthood. Fr DJ said it was his trust in God which led him to priesthood in the Diocese of Sandhurst; a world away from the plans he was making for himself while at a major seminary in the Philippines.

Originally from Makati City in Metro Manila, Fr DJ became a Sandhurst seminarian in 2016. On arrival in Bendigo, he wrote about his road to the priesthood:

My personal encounter with Jesus started in childhood when I joined my local parish in Makati City as an altar server. As I aged in that ministry, I realised what an honour it was to be very close to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It must be a greater honour for the priest, I thought to myself. Without me knowing it, I was already being drawn to the idea of priesthood. Like most teenagers, however, I did not give it much thought. I tried to brush it off, but the seed was already there.

Fr DJ joined a major seminary in Metro Manila and began priestly formation and studies in Philosophy. He says of this time:

I realised that I really did have the desire to be a priest ... I learned how to discern the calling, how to strengthen my personal encounter with Jesus through prayer. I thought that, after finishing my Philosophy studies in the seminary, I would immediately start studies in Theology but, I did not. Instead, I decided to take "regency", a period off from seminary studies to work, usually in an apostolic ministry. I taught in a secondary school as a Religious Education teacher. While teaching, I confronted myself about my desire to be a priest. At this point, I encountered Jesus in the many people who I met: my students, my colleagues, the parents of my students ..."

After completing his regency, Fr DJ made plans to return to the seminary in Manila and continue with his priestly formation. God however had other ideas. Fr DJ's aunt and uncle, who live in Wodonga, suggested he consider studying for the priesthood in Australia, something Fr DJ had not even thought of at that point. "God had a plan for my life," wrote Fr DJ on arriving in Australia in 2016. "Now I set out in the Diocese of Sandhurst to encounter Jesus in everyone that I meet."



**"I set out in the Diocese of Sandhurst to
encounter Jesus in everyone that I meet."**

Over the course of 2020, when there was temptation to despair and lose hope, Fr DJ reflected on the words of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which were said to Juan Diego when she appeared to him on Mount Tepeyac in Mexico almost 500 years ago. "No estoy yo aquí que soy tu madre?" "Am I not here, I, who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not the source of your joy? Are you not in the hollow of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Do you need anything more? Let nothing else worry you, disturb you."

Reflecting about the months in 2020 leading up to his ordination and Our Lady of Guadalupe, Fr DJ wrote 'Let nothing else worry you. Let nothing else disturb you.' How consoling these words of Our Lady are! When I read this quote during my message of gratitude, I had to let myself be contained in those motherly arms. I was her child after all ... all of us are."

MEANWHILE IN ROME



Rev. Deacon Adi Indra is currently studying a Licentiate of Canon Law at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He was ordained a deacon in Rome in October 2019 and God willing, will be ordained a priest of the Diocese of Sandhurst at Sacred Heart Cathedral in July 2021.

“For me personally, 2020 has been a year in which God taught me, amongst many other things, obedience.”

For me personally, 2020 has been a year in which God taught me, amongst many other things, obedience.”

In 2020 I learned that we are not in the control seat of life. Certainly, there are some things that we can handle ourselves but, even though we like to think that we can control everything, there are many things that are simply beyond our reach. We might not feel His presence all the time, but God is still in control.

2020 was to be the year in which I was ordained a priest. An initial plan to be ordained at Sacred Heart Cathedral in July, with then fellow-Deacon, Fr DJ Suguitan, was repeatedly pushed back in what seemed like a rolling calendar of impossible logistics. When I learned my first flight from Rome to Melbourne had been cancelled by the airline, I became disheartened. Then, as subsequent flights were booked and cancelled, my prospects of being ordained a priest in 2020 started to fade away.

Amidst all this, I was reminded of the promise that I took at my ordination to the diaconate, a promise of obedience to

my Bishop and his successors. Contrary to popular belief, the Church’s idea of obedience to our superiors, in my case, a Diocesan Bishop, is not a blind one. It is about understanding God’s will through the decision of our superiors, who have a wider vision of a community (either a diocese or a religious congregation), while trying to make the best of a situation. Obedience is often tough to do, but it gives freedom and peace if practised properly.

The etymology of the word “to obey” tells us that its root word is “to listen”. I really hope that we can learn from our experiences in 2020, how to listen more closely to Our Lord Jesus, whose words are “Spirit and Life” (John 6:63).

Obedience to God through the believing community in the Church leads us to a more attentive listening to the Holy Spirit, who always leads us to the Truth (cf. John 16:13). God does not use obedience to enslave us, but to set us free from any forms of slavery.

If we believe that God loves us and wants the best for us, let us accept the constant call of Jesus, who invites us to attune our thoughts and actions, even our dreams and desires, to His Will, because it is only in Him that we can find the fullness of life (cf. John 10:10).

“I really hope that we can learn from our experiences in 2020, how to listen more closely to Our Lord Jesus, whose words are ‘Spirit and Life’.”
(John 6:63).

“In the beginning of March the whole of Italy went into strict lockdown.

By the end of March the seminarian community had shrunk from 180 people to 24 people as many seminarians returned to their home countries, including Sandhurst seminarian Jackson Saunders.

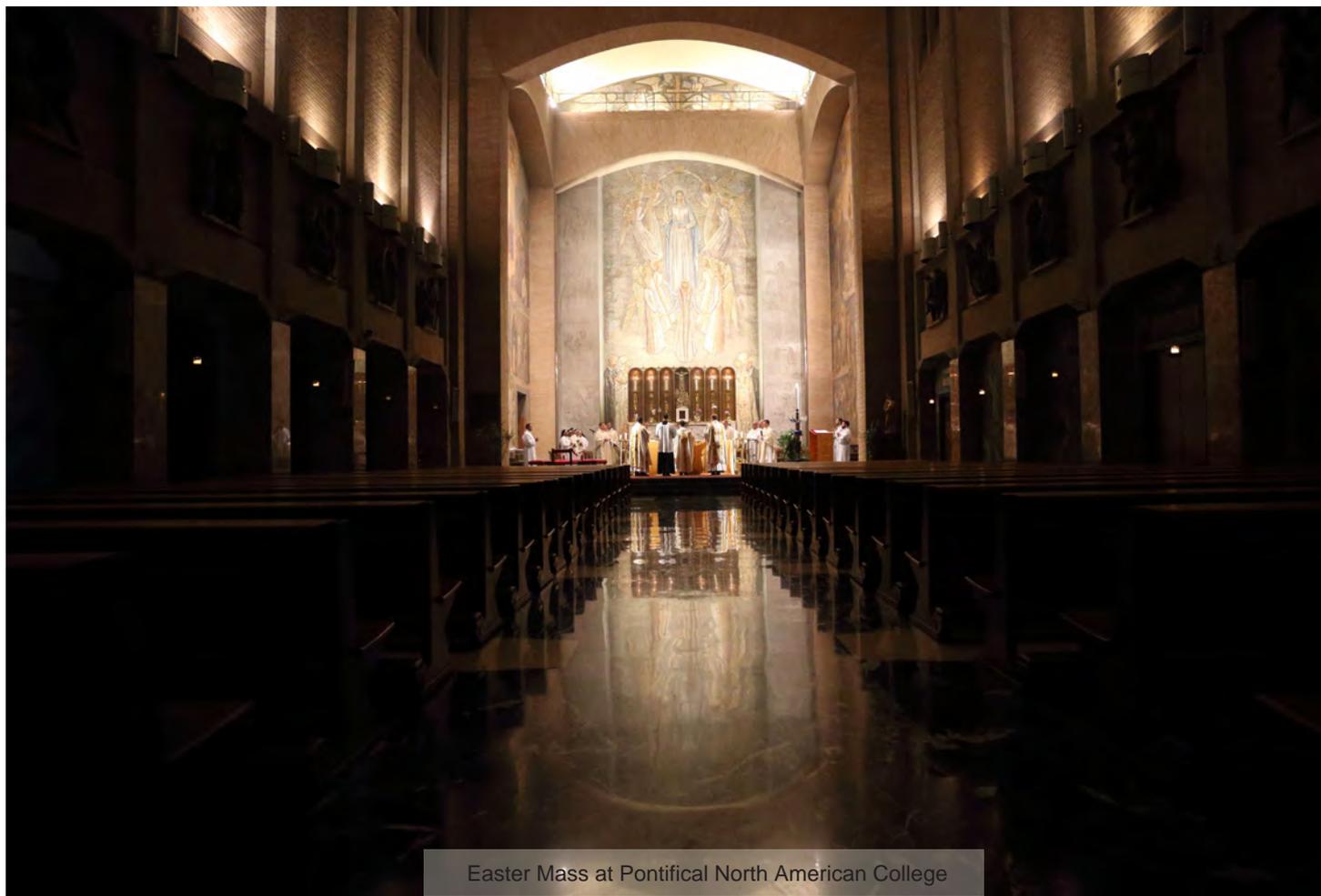
By June, lockdown had eased somewhat and public Masses were allowed.

Postgraduate studies in Canon Law continued online. We tried to minimise the impact caused by the disruptions by keeping the same schedule until the end of semester in late May.”

Adi Indra



Seminarians farewell Jackson Saunders who returned to Australia at the beginning of lockdown.



Easter Mass at Pontifical North American College



“On behalf of the Sandhurst students and wider seminary community, we thank the many communities in our diocese for their wonderful hospitality, prayerful support, and practical help in so many ways throughout 2020.”

FROM THE SEMINARY

Corpus Christi College in Carlton is the regional seminary for the dioceses of Victoria and Tasmania, and in addition, currently hosts students from Darwin, Adelaide, and Port Pirie. The college provides an environment for students to be formed in a spirit of generous service for the church communities they will eventually be part of, learn from, and serve.

Pope Francis has written much on the topic of ministry, and his vision of formation is both exciting and challenging. On one hand, he invites seminarians to live in the midst of a community; continually learning from those we meet along the way through a generous “going out” to meet people. On the other hand, however, he invites students to reflect on what these moments mean: a deep listening and openness to the presence of the Holy Spirit, calling us in the midst of our daily lives and challenging us to see Jesus in our midst from new perspectives.

One of the great “challenges” yet “blessings” of 2020 was that much of this learning moved from the traditional setting of the seminary and surrounds to places beyond. In 2020 students were invited to relocate to home and parish communities throughout the periods of lockdown. This provided a great opportunity for the college community to adapt, learn and support each other in new ways.

On behalf of the Sandhurst students and wider seminary community, we thank the many communities in our diocese for their wonderful hospitality, prayerful support, and practical help in so many ways throughout 2020.

Rev. Dr Jake Mudge

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



L-R: Jackson Saunders, Adonis Peña, Bishop Shane Mackinlay, Ezekiel Hangan, Dominic Manatad

SEMINARIANS



EZEKIEL HANGAN

THIRD YEAR

Ezekiel became a Sandhurst seminarian in the middle of 2020. He has a close association with the town of Bright, where he spent many childhood holidays with his grandparents. Ezekiel spent the year residing in a combination of places: with his parents, in Bendigo at St Kilian's Parish and some time back at the seminary. He was also able to make several visits to Bright, where members of his family still live.



DOMINIC MANATAD

THIRD YEAR

Dominic spent much of the year supported in the north-east of the diocese, residing in Wodonga Parish with Fr Junjun Amaya, Fr Shibu Pezhumthottathil and the wider parish community. This involved travelling beyond Wodonga to places such as the Kiewa Valley, Tallangatta, and Corryong.

Dominic is a passionate member of the Seminary Schola, which he says provides a wonderful means to "express my love to the Lord through singing at Mass."



ADONIS PEÑA

THIRD YEAR

"In 2020 I often reflected on the suffering of many people in different communities around the world. For so many people, the suffering caused by the global pandemic is still to be resolved. 2020 was a strange year, but also a fruitful and beautiful year, which offered times of solitude and prayer, of peace and consolation; that I may worry less but still be sensitive to the needs of others. I spent time gardening, planting, and pruning in St Kilian's Presbytery grounds where I resided. I found this time to be therapeutic: it filled me with awe and wonder at God's goodness and creation. It helped me to remain positive. 2020 encouraged me to see God's presence and to appreciate it in a deeper way. I think that life becomes grace-filled when we realise that God's love is abiding."



JACKSON SAUNDERS

SIXTH YEAR

"I look back on 2020 with gratitude and wonder at how the year unfolded. The year began in Rome where I thought I would remain for at least another three years. However, due to COVID-19, I decided to return home to Australia. I arrived in Bendigo on March 21 and entered two weeks' of isolation in a secluded part of St Kilian's Presbytery. I completed my quarantine in time to participate in the live-streamed Holy Week and Easter Masses. It was a strange experience to be in the Church with no parishioners. Soon after Easter, I moved to Wangaratta where I assisted in the parish for ten weeks and completed the academic year and university assessments from Rome via correspondence. Mid-last year I discerned in consultation with Bishop Shane and others that I felt that God was calling me to complete my seminary formation in Australia. In late November I moved to Echuca Parish to begin a new parish pastoral placement. The experiences of 2020 affirmed my calling to the priesthood and were full of joyful occasions, albeit under challenging circumstances at times."

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF VOCATIONS

I was appointed Director of Vocations in late 2019. I have spent much of 2020 working collaboratively with Sandhurst Youth Ministry to develop a program to promote vocations.

This program includes speaking at Deanery meetings across the Diocese to promote the many pastoral opportunities and initiatives offered to our young people and working closely with Catholic Education Sandhurst to immerse Youth Ministry and Vocations programs into the school curriculum, retreats and other events.

During 2020 opportunities to visit parishes and schools were very limited due to COVID-19 restrictions. Nevertheless, this provided the perfect opportunity to strengthen a four-phased diocesan application process for potential seminarians. The process was presented at the May meeting of the College of Consultors; this has been fine-tuned to include their feedback.

‘Come and See’ Program

One phase of this process includes a ‘Come and See’ Formation Program. In this phase of the application process, an applicant undertakes placement in parishes, where he is exposed to parish life and pastoral ministry in schools, hospitals and nursing homes. The ‘Come and See’ Program aims to provide an opportunity for the applicant to better understand the responsibilities of the priesthood; and of course, allow the Diocese to learn more about the applicant.

Vocations Ministry Team

The decision to offer an applicant a place in Sandhurst as a seminarian, will be determined by a Vocations Ministry Team after a process of discernment. With the endorsement of Bishop Shane, a Vocations Ministry Team will be established in 2021. The team will include the Vocations Director (myself), Youth Ministers of the Diocese, the Seminary Formator (Fr Jake Mudge), lay people (possibly a married couple), and a seminarian.

Applicants in 2020

In 2020 the Office of the Vocations Director received an average of three enquiries a month from potential seminarians. In 2020, twenty enquirers became applicants; seven of these completed the application process. Only two of the seven have been selected for interviews.

When COVID-19 restrictions ease, I plan to meet these two applicants in person with a view to them starting the ‘Come and See’ placement phase of their application process.

Vocations Directors in Victoria and Tasmania

I have been privileged to benefit from the sharing of knowledge and experience with fellow Vocations Directors of the Dioceses in Victoria and Tasmania. In March 2020 we gathered at Corpus Christi College, in Carlton. In August we gathered via Zoom.

Rev. Fr Nathan Verallo

Director of Vocations
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst



26 April

Third-year seminarian, Adonis Peña, was instituted to the Ministry of Lector during the live-streamed Mass at St Kilian’s in Bendigo. This was an important moment in Adonis’ vocational journey as he continues his studies for the priesthood in the Diocese of Sandhurst.



April

While on placement in Wodonga, seminarian Dominic Manatad helped to deliver rice to refugee families.

GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY

“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

John 10:10b

Pray for our future shepherds.

Dominic Manatad Year III	Adonis Peña Year III	Jackson Saunders Year VI	Rev. Denib Josette Suguitan Year VII	Rev. Adi Indra Year VII

SEMINARIANS FOR THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SANDHURST ————— 2020

For enquiries on priestly vocation in our Diocese, how you can support and pray for our seminarians and priests,

Contact our Director of Vocations:
np.verallo@gmail.com

Visit our Facebook page:
facebook.com/sandhurstvocations



Seminarian Jackson Saunders spoke about his journey to the priesthood at a live-streamed Mass on Good Shepherd Sunday.

ADULT FAITH EDUCATION SANDHURST



“I am inspired by the way our parish communities have looked out for each other, during lockdown and after the devastating fires of early 2020.”

“Our Church has an important role to play in building the city of God in reality and online ... We have the ability to connect with others in ways never dreamed of and to use that ability to bandage the wounded, lift them up and lead them to a safe place in both the online and real world. As a community of faith, let us make real the love of God in our virtual world.”

These words from the Australian Bishops’ 2019-2020 Social Justice Statement had a prophetic ring to them, as many pastoral endeavours went online during the COVID impacted year of 2020. The Sandhurst Diocese Adult Faith Education Ministry shared resources and information to support parishes, groups and individuals to stay connected and to pray together in the digital world. Parish leaders and parishioners in our Diocese learned to use Zoom and extended their social media skills. Information about live-streamed Masses, online resources for Faith Education prayer, retreats, conferences and small group gatherings were shared between Australian and overseas dioceses. 180 people shared their ideas for parish activities and actions to keep people connected and continue prayer and worship via a FaceBook page called ‘Sandhurst Parish Ideas for Parish Connections during COVID19’.

In 2020, many of us, for the first time, could easily access live or recorded liturgies, conferences, parish renewal and faith formation opportunities from other regions of our Diocese, Australia and from countries far away. The Adult Faith Education Ministry assisted people of our parishes, who had digital access, to do the same. There were greater challenges in offering support during ‘lockdown’ to those without digital access, but parish Pastoral Associates and volunteers shared their experiences of ‘Phone Trees’ or ‘letterbox drops’ to help those who were isolated.

Sandhurst Pastoral Associates

Sandhurst Pastoral Associates network members met online via Zoom in 2020, with one Pastoral Associate writing: “Zoom has managed to keep us in touch – and given those of us who were feeling down and isolated, a feeling of connection and being all the better for the sharing of the load.”

Liturgy of the Word and Communion for the Sick

Another task undertaken by the Adult Faith Education Reference group was preparation of draft documents for celebrations of the Liturgy of the Word with Communion

and Communion to the Sick for our Diocese. This project, due for completion in 2021, will be designed to support parishes that may find themselves without a priest available to celebrate Mass with them on some Sundays.

‘Our Catholic Faith’ video series

With Scripture scholar, Fr Brian Boyle, short videos exploring ‘Our Catholic Faith’ were published online:

- ‘The Presences of Christ in the Mass’
- ‘The Word of God’ and ‘Imaginative Prayer’
- ‘Understanding the Word of God in the Catholic Tradition’



Understanding the Word of God Lecture series

A full-day event planned for 2020, went online with Fr Brian’s three lectures:

- ‘The Canon of Sacred Scripture’,
- ‘Vatican II on Inspiration’
- ‘Spiritual Sense and Literal Sense’

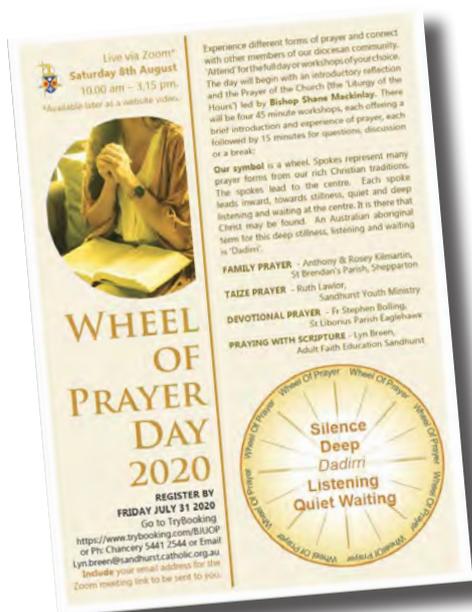
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

As some events needed to be cancelled in 2020, and others became digital in format, there were few face-to-face encounters. The RCIA Reflection Day, however, facilitated by Anne Hubbard and Anthony Kilmartin, and the Rite of Election with a group of eighteen Catechumens and Candidates from five parishes, were celebrated 'pre COVID lockdown'.



Wheel of Prayer Day

The 2020 Wheel of Prayer Day went ahead in an online format in August. Bishop Shane Mackinlay introduced and led 'The Prayer of the Church' for the Feast of Mary MacKillop. Four workshops followed, each presenting a different prayer form.



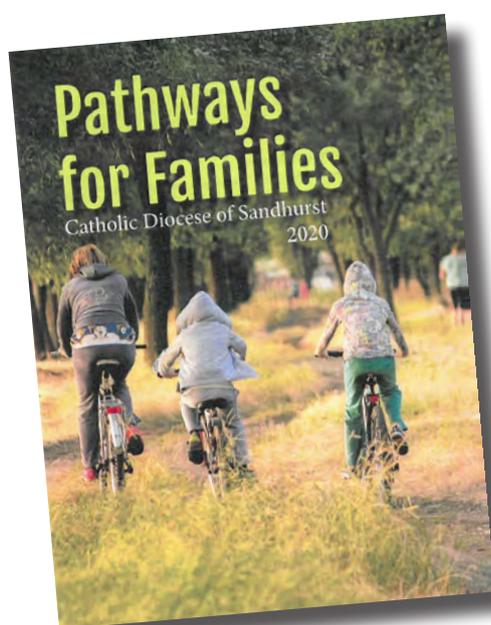
Lent and Advent Resources

Lent and Advent 2020 online resources for small group or individual reflection and prayer, featured excerpts from Pope Francis' *Christus Vivit* ('Christ is Alive') exhortation to young people for Lent, and for Advent, his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* ('Brothers and Sisters All') together with a focus on a Plenary Council theme for discernment: 'A Joyful, Hope-filled, Servant Church'.



Pathways Booklets

'Pathways for Families 2020' was published online with links for networks and resources to enrich and support families. This was followed by 'Pathways for Seniors 2020' to support over 55s in their continuing journeys of Faith, Prayer, Spirituality and community connection.



Visits to the North-East

When 'lockdown' ended, I visited parish communities in Cobram, Yarrawonga, Rutherglen, Wodonga, Tallangatta and Corryong. I was inspired by their stories, and the creative strategies they put in place to practise their faith as communities despite COVID-19 restrictions. I am inspired by the way our parish communities have looked out for each other, during lockdown and after the devastating fires of early 2020.

Ms Lyn Breen

Adult Faith Education Sandhurst
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

GREATER HEIGHTS

YOUTH MINISTRY REPORT



Each year Sandhurst Youth Ministry draws on a theme to help shape what it offers for the year. For 2020's theme, "Greater Heights", inspiration was drawn from Psalm 121:-2, NIV

**“ I lift up my eyes to the mountains —
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.”**

With great uncertainty often comes great opportunities. The Sandhurst Youth Ministry team members (SYM) were able to trial several online offerings in different forums to engage with young people across the Diocese.

Year 12 Retreats and Online School Visits

SYM were able to attend several Year 12 retreats in February. School retreats provide students with opportunities to encounter God through relationships with each other.

Each retreat provides an opportunity for SYM to make connections with both staff and students, creating opportunities to both learn more about the lives of young people today and accompany them along their faith journey, even if only for part of the road.

SYM were also able to attend virtual lessons, chatting with students during their regular classes. These school visits had different forms depending on the needs of the school but varied from informal conversations to more formalised content.

WYD @ Home

Each year, local Parishes and Dioceses are invited to celebrate World Youth Day at Home on Palm Sunday. In 2020, this was given a more literal meaning as the majority of the world was in lockdown. Over the course of the day, videos were released on different topics connected to Pope Francis' thematic

gospel "Young man, I say to you, arise!" (Lk 7:14).

These included a message to the youth of Sandhurst from Bishop Shane, conversations, guided prayer, and wellbeing advice.

Each of the videos was made available via the Sandhurst Youth YouTube Channel, as well as Facebook and Instagram. In 2021 WYD has been shifted to the feast of Christ the King.

Digital Content

YouTube became the main home for SYM's offerings for 2020 through both the Sandhurst Youth and Stronger Youth Channels. Two Stronger Rallies were run online as well as a Pentecost Vigil Youth Mass. Other videos, including a message from Bishop Shane to all of Sandhurst's Year 12 students, several weeks' worth of Weekday Morning Prayer videos, and a series on Advent, were also made available. Other Social Media accounts on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter supported what was available on YouTube.

Ms Ruth Lawlor

**Coordinator of Youth Ministry
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst**



**PENTECOST VIGIL MASS,
WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING**



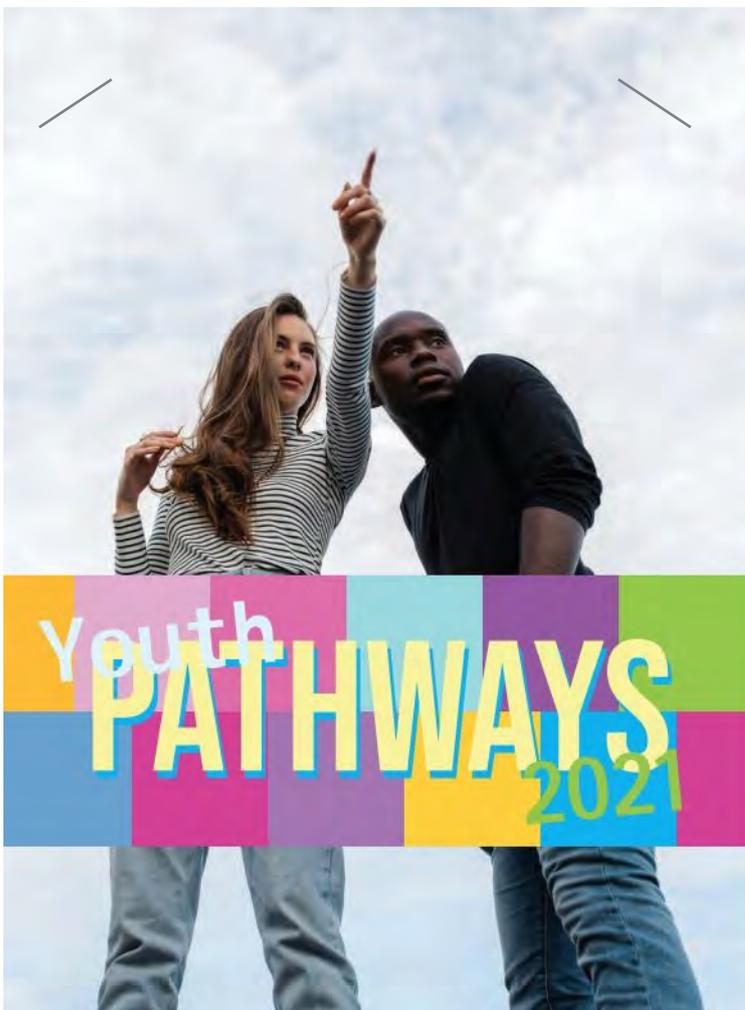
**STRONGER TONIGHT RALLY, ONLINE
DECEMBER 2020**



**THE SAGA AT STRONGER TONIGHT
RALLY, ONLINE DECEMBER 2020**



**"LET'S CHAT WITH BISHOP SHANE" 4
MAY 2020 (WITH RUTH)**



FIRES OF BLACK SUMMER

As they watched the sun set behind Mount Mitta Mitta for the last time in 2019, people in the Corryong valley did not think they would wake the following morning to be ambushed by fire. On New Year's Day, instead of celebrating, they were putting out spot-fires on the outskirts of their towns, confident their townships would be protected. As the situation became apparently more dire, people took refuge at designated community refuges. By afternoon, Victorian Police told people in Corryong to evacuate or risk being isolated in a town without official assistance, electricity, or water. That evening, two convoys of evacuees were escorted by the CFA to either Wodonga or Tallangatta.

Whether they chose to stay or chose to leave, the people of the Upper Murray were tested. Stories of resilience and solidarity spread from the streets to social media and throughout the world. Stories of people who had lost their homes and livestock, helping others to save theirs, the CFA volunteers working relentlessly throughout New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

Principal of Sacred Heart Primary School, Corryong, Ms Zoe Nugent, wrote of the experience on 10 January

This town and its surrounds have taken a beating. We have been hit hard, but the Upper Murray people are known for their determination and spirit. It will take time. But with the grace of God, we will get through it.

The fires in the Upper Murray were part of what we now know as the Black Summer of 2019-2020; Australia's costliest 'natural' disaster to date. Across the east of Australia 186,000 square kilometres of land was burnt, three billion animals were killed, and 34 people lost their lives. The air quality dropped to hazardous levels with smoke blanketing most of south-east Australia and moving as far as South America.

The smoke was not the only thing that spread. The eyes of all the world seemed focused on the crisis; images of fleeing kangaroos silhouetted against lurid orange skies; charred livestock and razed homes fed their horror. Sandhurst seminarian Jackson Saunders, who was studying in Rome at the time wrote in his 'View from Rome' column, "As I watched the bushfire situation unfold in Australia, ... I was inspired by the way that we cared for each other."

Principal of Borinya Wangaratta Community Partnership, Genevieve O'Reilly, who was holidaying in Ireland at the time, wrote in an email, "Everywhere we go, as soon as people hear our accents, they convey to us their deep sorrow for what is happening in Australia."

The Catholic Women's League (CWL) of England and Wales donated funds to CWL Australia, to distribute to communities in need, one being Sacred Heart Primary School, Corryong. Principal Zoe Nugent wrote in her letter of thanks, "It is with much gratitude that we receive this generous donation ... we have never experienced such a fierce, uncontrolled fire with frontage extending for hundreds of kilometres on all sides. The fast-moving front approached us during the night, so you can imagine the chaos ..."

As the fires joined to create 'megafires', the situation was consistently described as apocalyptic; there was apparently no other word for it. Even the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC), in their statement announcing a national response to the bushfire crisis and a national Australia Day Appeal, referred, albeit metaphorically, to the fires as 'apocalyptic'.

Released on 3 January the ACBC wrote in their statement, "There is no end in sight to the horror which confronts us with our powerlessness before the devastating force of nature. ...With broad and deep roots across the nation, the Church stands ready to walk alongside people throughout their journey of recovery." The bishops asked for "insistent prayer for those stricken by drought and fire, for those who have lost their lives in the fires and their families, for rain to quench the parched land and extinguish the fires, and for urgent action to care for our common home so we can prevent such calamities in the future."

Bishop Shane Mackinlay wrote to parishes and schools

We remember the great suffering of the Black Saturday fires, and know well that the effects of such trauma will be felt for many months, and even years to come. Our support of the St Vincent de Paul Bushfire Appeal ensures that our brothers and sisters have assistance in rebuilding their lives after the devastation of these fires.

In late January, Director of the Catholic Education Office (CEO), Mr Paul Desmond, and the Episcopal Vicar for Education, Rev. Dr Brian Boyle, visited schools in fire-affected towns.

We felt a great deal of admiration for the resilience of the Corryong community

wrote Mr Desmond in a letter to the Sacred Heart Primary School community. "We took the opportunity to assure Zoe (principal) and the staff of Sacred Heart Primary School of the full support of all in the CEO. We offer you, the primary educators of the child, the same commitment," he wrote.

Indeed, the staff of CEO had been offering support to each other and their respective school communities throughout the course of the fires. Mr Paul Desmond, Director of the CEO emailed a regular 'Fire bulletin'.

As preparation for the new school year commenced, the CEO worked closely with CatholicCare Sandhurst to identify the best ways to assist children once they returned to school, using evidenced-based recovery programs and appropriate therapeutic support.

CatholicCare Sandhurst Director, Ms Rhonda Lawson-Street wrote at the time, "For CatholicCare Sandhurst, our response includes cross-border collaboration with other Catholic agencies to ensure that those who need timely and intensive emotional and psychological assistance can receive skilled support for as long as needed."



Blazeaid signs in Wala.

Bishop Shane Mackinlay visited fire-affected areas in February, celebrating Mass at Sacred Heart Church, Corryong and St Michael's Church, Tallangatta. In his Homily, Bishop Shane observed that one of the consequences of natural disasters such as fire, is that "we necessarily regain focus on the things that matter most, on the life that stands before us ... the water, instead of the fire."

Administrator of the parishes of Corryong and Tallangatta, Fr Junjun Amaya was in the Philippines when the fires broke out. He was told by parishioners not to return, as he would not be allowed access to the area and, due to the imminent danger, Mass in all towns had been cancelled. The Blessed Sacrament had been consumed on 3 January and was no longer reserved at Sacred Heart Church, Corryong.

Reflecting on the bushfires, Fr Amaya said

One of the great things to come out of the terrible Black Summer experience was the sense of community spirit, the beauty of these small communities like Corryong, Walwa, Tolac and Tallangatta, has really shone.

"They have supported each other in very thoughtful ways. Not just during the fires, but long after, continuing to check in on each other throughout the year. People from Wodonga would travel to fire-affected towns to help out; feed livestock, work on fencing, and so on," said Fr Amaya. "I'm very proud of my parishioners."

On Ash Wednesday 2020, ashes from burnt trees in Corryong were used for Ash Wednesday Mass services in Corryong, Tallangatta and Mount Beauty. Fr Amaya said

We can say we were trying to give people a sense that they can 'rise from the ashes'.

To rise from the ashes, we need to acknowledge we live in a humanised pyroscapes. The average temperature of Australia

overall in December 2019 was the highest ever and the Indian Ocean Dipole event, which contributed to three years of drought preceding the fires, the strongest on record; a double calamity which, according to scientists, can be attributed to climate change.

It is now widely accepted and clear that we need to exercise self-initiative and agency to reduce the impact of global warming. On 17 January, the Australian Bishops announced their support, in principle, for a proposed bill on a National Framework for Adaptation and Action on Climate Change.

Bishop Vincent Long, Chair of the Australian Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service said

The Bushfire crisis should serve as a wake-up call to Australia and all Australians. It should serve also as a catalyst for global action on climate change

Whether we look to science, or look to the Book of Revelations, we are on the verge of an apocalypse.

Across the globe, people are demanding change to the values and way of life that evidently destroy our 'common home' while making us seemingly more lonely and unhappy. There is a real sense that change will be forged from these fires.

On 7 February, prayers for 'rain to quench the parched land and extinguish the fires' as exhorted by the ACBC were answered. Torrential rain helped to extinguish one third of the fires. Perhaps a sign from the heavens, that God does help those who help themselves.

GLOBAL PANDEMIC

The Global Coronavirus Pandemic changed the way we think forever. It was a revelation, hard evidence of what we already knew – that even a virus that ‘doesn’t discriminate’ hurts the poor, vulnerable and elderly the most; that social determinants of health are real; that our economic structures aren’t fair on everyone; that we really are connected and inter-connected. The world really is small, and we really are ‘all in this together’.

We learned, perhaps for the first time, that we are capable of radical change and adaptation. We learned that in a crisis, we focus on what matters; many Australians turned to prayer for the first time in years; and remarkable acts of solidarity at all levels of society and stories of kindness have given us a glimpse of the world we could become.

27 February

Prime Minister, Scott Morrison declared a pandemic.

18 March

“The Bishops of the Province of Victoria have given this prayerful and considered reflection, and have determined the following actions:

Immediate suspension of public liturgies, celebration of the Mass, until further notice. All other gatherings are suspended.

“In light of this, all Catholics in Victoria are dispensed from their Sunday obligation until further notice (canon 1248).

“This is very distressing news to share with you, and will be a dramatic change in the faith life of our communities,” Bishop Mackinlay said.

“We should expect that it will continue for some time into the future.”

19 March

“Following the Victorian Bishops’ decision to cancel the public celebrations of the Church’s liturgies in light of COVID-19 pandemic, we would like to offer you some suggestions on how to foster your prayer life in these unprecedented times:

- personal prayer and family prayer;
- reading and reflecting on the Scriptures, especially the readings of the day;
- reciting the Holy Rosary;
- tuning in and participating actively in the live-streamed Masses and making an act of spiritual communion.”

22 March Laetare Sunday

First Mass live-streamed from St Kilian’s.

24 March (midnight)

Victorian government restricts numbers at weddings to the couple, a celebrant and two witnesses. Funerals restricted to no more than ten people.

2 April

“We recognise that these are extraordinary times and people are experiencing high levels of confusion and disruption, with many having lost their employment or receiving diminished income due to the coronavirus crisis.”

“The Catholic way is always to seek the common good and our community knows that, when times are tough, we support one another and certainly never penalise anyone who finds their finances have tightened.”

Bishop Shane Mackinlay reaffirming no child will leave Catholic schools due to financial hardship

11 April

“As we worry about how the pandemic might progress, we are feeling vulnerable and anxious, uncertain about what the coming months will hold for us. Yet this is also a time of hope. I have been heartened and encouraged by the creative and generous ways that people are finding to maintain social connection, even if we are physically distant. We are more aware of our solidarity with one another and the importance of our community structures”.

Bishop Shane Mackinlay
Easter Message

12 April Easter Sunday

“As Christians, a fundamental part of our response will be heeding Pope Francis’ advice on the World Day of Peace to “change the way we think and see things, and to become more open to encountering others and accepting the gift of creation, which reflects the beauty and wisdom of its Creator.”

Bishop Shane Mackinlay
Easter Vigil Mass



Mass on Holy Thursday live-streamed from St Kilian's.



After the Easter Vigil Mass live-streamed from St Kilian's

1 May Feast of St Joseph the Worker Pastoral Message

“This major shock to our community, and our economy, could provide an opportunity to reset our thinking about how we support the poorest, most marginalised, and most vulnerable members of our community.”

In a climate of fear, there is a tendency to narrow our circle. God calls us to a different way: working together, needing each other, being the body of Christ. May St Joseph, model of integrity and solidarity, inspire us to serve and to care for all.”

Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen
ACBC Office for Social Justice

14 May

“Even when our doors are closed, our hearts are still open. The churches may not yet be fully open, but the heart of the Church, which is the heart of Christ, is wide open.”

Australian Catholic Bishops
Open letter of encouragement to the Catholic People of Australia

24 May Feast of Mary Help of Christians

Australian Catholic Bishops entrusted Australia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary under the title Our Lady Help of Christians, seeking her intercession for the safety of all our people especially in this time of COVID-19 pandemic.



O Immaculate Mary, Help of Christians, Queen of heaven and earth, and tender Mother of humanity, at this time when a pandemic threatens all your children, we entrust to you our nation, Australia, and all who live in this country.

1 June

Restrictions eased. Liturgies, prayer gatherings and weddings up to 20 people, funerals up to 50 people, social distancing at least 1.5m and sign-in for contact tracing required.

Communion on the hand only

No exchange of the sign of peace.

No holy water stoups

No hymn books

28 September

“In the most simple of measures, the current restrictions in regional Victoria literally fail the ‘pub test’: if people of faith can gather in a restaurant or bar catering for a particular number of patrons (and remove their face covering), they ought to be able to put on their mask, cross the road and worship in their faith community with the same numbers, provided equivalent COVID-safe practices are in place.”

Victorian Bishops
Open letter to Premier Daniel Andrews

6 December

The Victorian Premier announced a major easing of restrictions. For Churches: liturgies of any kind, private prayer, meetings and other gatherings are permitted in churches, church halls and other parish facilities with social distancing of 1 person per 4 square metres if there is no contact recording, and 1 person per 2 square metres if there is contact recording. Face coverings must be carried, minister to use hand sanitiser before celebrating communion. Non-liturgical gatherings outdoors to be limited to 100 people.

VIRTUAL SOLIDARITY



"Tell the Bishop I'll FaceTime him," said our oldest Sandhurst priest, Fr Owen Doyle.



St Liborius' parishioner and octogenarian, Mary Harrison bought a computer and signed up to Broadband so she wouldn't miss out on Mass.



Many Sandhurst priests kept in touch with parishioners via social media. Fr Joe Taylor reached out with regular online chats and prayers.



Fr Junjun Amaya gave an online tutorial to demonstrate his set-up to film Mass.



At Wodonga Parish, Mass celebrated by Fr Junjun Amaya and Fr Shibu Pezhumthotathil was shared on Facebook.



Kerang, Cohuna and Pyramid Hill parishes joined together for online Mass celebrated by their Parish Priest, Fr Novelito Lim. Every Sunday a guest Homilist joined their gatherings. Held via Zoom, parishioners were able to participate in Reading and singing. Parishioners also took the opportunity to chat with each other before and after the Mass.

To keep in touch, many priests hand-delivered Parish bulletins to their parishioners, made phone calls and participated in meetings online.



During lockdown, Sunday Mass celebrated at St Kilian's by Bishop Shane Mackinlay, was live-streamed and watched by some 1600 viewers each week.



The Priests' Inservice was held via Video Conference. Throughout lockdown priests gathered together for weekly prayer and reflection via Zoom.

INGENUITY AND RESILIENCE

OUTDOOR MASSES



St Kilian's, Bendigo



St Patrick's, Kerang



St Therese's, Kennington



Churches baffled by indoor service ban

A Wodonga priest wants to move his Sunday mass to a local eatery to take a stand against the Victorian government as churches are still not allowed to hold services indoors.

Wangaratta Catholic priests take bookings for marathon of masses as COVID-19 restrictions ease

ABC Goulburn Murray
/
Staff reporters
Posted Tue Tuesday 2 Jun June 2020 at 2:55pm, updated Tue Tuesday 2 Jun June 2020 at 3:00pm



Assistant priest Dean Bongat and parish Priest Father Mike Pullar are ready to "gently welcome" parishioners back to [mass](#).



In Pyramid Hill, Fr Novelito Lim and parishioners assisted Pyramid Hill Community Food Share.



Parishes found creative ways to maintain social distancing once indoor Mass was permitted.



Outdoor Christmas Mass at St Brendan's, Shepparton

BUSINESS AS USUAL



Fr Junray Rayna, Parish Priest of St Kilian's, celebrated Lenten Mass at Hanging Rock.



Students at St Patrick's Primary School in Kerang celebrated St Patrick's Day.



9 April, Fr Joe Taylor baptised an RCIA catechumen at St Brendan's, Shepparton.



August, Fr Rob Galea celebrated ten years as a Priest.



23 October, Fr John Paul Pasala celebrated one year of service as Parish Priest of Tatura.



Sandhurst nurses continued their important work caring for Clergy. Amongst other things, they presented a Zoom session on healthy eating and circulated a regular newsletter to Sandhurst Clergy.



7 February, Bishop Shane blessed the new Senior Learning Centre at Holy Rosary Primary School in White Hills.



12 March, Bishop Shane blessed and opened the Magdalen Building at St Mary's Primary School in Cohuna.

MR JOHN HOGAN

Diocesan living treasure retires after forty years of service

Mr John Hogan, seventh Cathedral organist, ninth Director of the Choir, our first Organist and Director of Music and our first lay Diocesan Director of Sacred Music at Sacred Heart Cathedral, has retired after forty years of dedicated service. Mr Hogan's last official Mass was held on 22 November 2020, a date specifically chosen by him as it was the Feast of Saint Cecilia, the patron saint of musicians.

It is not a stretch to consider Mr John Hogan as a 'diocesan living treasure', he is a keeper of the knowledge and skills required to perform and re-create unique aspects of our intangible cultural heritage; the transposition of our senses through music in to worship and prayer.

Born in Leongatha, John moved to Kyabram when he was five years old. His first lessons in music were with the Brigidine Sisters at St Augustine's Primary School when he learned to play the most humble of instruments, the recorder; back in the days when John thought all priests had Irish accents. John's interest in music continued and he studied piano with Ms Miriam McKenzie who was a "very fine piano teacher and great fun," said John. "To improve my sight-reading, she would give me a book marked with pieces to play, and I would go through the whole book," he said. "My parents bought a phonograph which came with a free 45 rpm record; one side was Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite, I was in riveted ... then one day at high school, someone played Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto over the loud-speakers and again, I was riveted, I thought, 'hey that is something!'" And thus began John's liturgical music journey.

Surprisingly, after finishing Year 12 in Kyabram, John studied economics at Monash University in Melbourne then entered the public service. While working, he studied for diplomas in music, and eventually became a music teacher. His first job as a teacher was at Tottenham Technical College in Melbourne, which was known to be a tough gig. John started a brass band. "They were basically good honest kids and they got a real sense of achievement from the brass band," said John noting he also enjoyed the experience himself.

While in Melbourne John studied with some of the best liturgical musicians in Melbourne; pipe organ with Maestro Sergio de Pieri, orchestral conducting with gifted Romanian conductor Robert Rosen and choral conducting with Sir David Willcocks of Kings College fame.

Prior to starting at Sacred Heart Cathedral, John was assistant organist at St Carthage's, Parkville, then assistant organist at St Joseph's South Yarra, then organist at Sacred Heart (St George's), Carlton where the Parish Priest was the renowned musician Rev. Dr Percy Jones. John was both organist and choirmaster at Our Lady of Victories, Camberwell, and was also assistant to Maestro Sergio de Pieri, (his pipe organ teacher), at St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne. During this time John was also Principal Study Organ Teacher at the Melba Memorial Conservatorium of Music. He also played piano, organ and keyboard with the Australia Felix ensemble, which regularly recorded for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and workshopped music with local composers.

John's first Mass as organist and choirmaster at Sacred Heart Cathedral, was on Trinity Sunday, 1 June 1980. "I was very

happy it went well" said John, "especially, since we needed extra people in the choir for Fr Andrew Fewings' ordination which was to be six weeks after. Fortunately, quite a few joined us and many stayed on with the choir afterwards."

When John started at the Cathedral, the choir had seventeen members and they were not used to turning up regularly. "Being a teacher, I said to them — if you don't turn up to practice you can't come and sing on Sunday. So, I was worried nobody would turn up, but they all did. It meant I could plan the music for Mass knowing what voices we've got on what Sunday and I think the choir members were proud to be part of a more committed group and actually enjoyed taking things more seriously," said John.

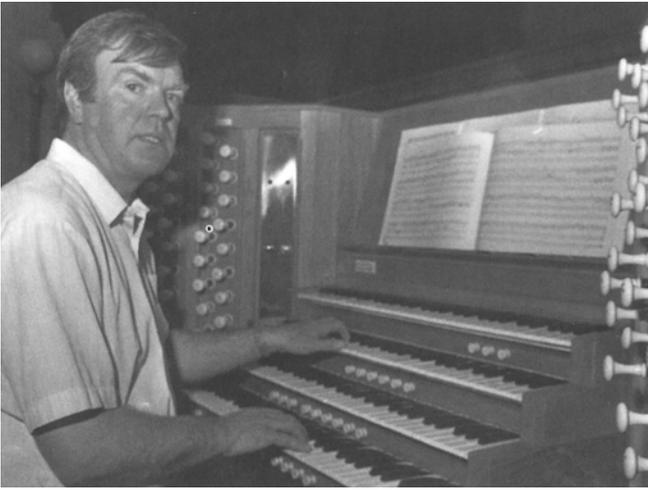
"When I first came here, people would say "that wasn't bad for a kids Liturgy" or "you're doing a good job for a country choir." I thought, why does it have to be a lesser standard here than in Melbourne? We are people, we can do exactly the same, why can't we do as good as anywhere else? So we aimed to be as good as we possibly could. Every week we did something different ... For me personally, to consistently have every Sunday Mass go well and every Sunday be different, all in sync with beautiful interludes is a real achievement." said John. "Over the years, I got to the point where, as an organist, I could improvise in the French tradition. If you go to Mass at Notre Dame, the choir sings to the music sheet, but the organist always improvises. That for me is a personal achievement." said John.

"When I was young trying to do new Liturgies, and following the books, I was very anxious about it. Now, after forty years, I'm still a bit on edge, but I know where I'm going," smiled John, adding once when a procession was running very late, a member of the clergy told asked him to "improvise in F# minor".

Like all genres of music, liturgical music evolves over time, beyond the standard repertoire of Gregorian chants. "Music at Mass needs to be congregationally friendly, so people can join in," said John. "Sometimes we need to over play when the congregation isn't singing, at other times play less, to almost coerce them to join in. We need to get the balance right. When the congregation sings, the choir can add richness with harmonies and descants, but not enough to put the congregation off; it's a cat and mouse game in a way," said John. "At Bishop Shane's Installation Mass we didn't need to do any of that, because the congregation just joined in," said John.

Writing Mass Settings and Motets for the choir has given John a great sense of achievement; one of the Mass Settings was commissioned for the Centenary of the Royal Australian Navy. He wrote others for Masses such as the Feast of Saint Augustine and the Feast of the Sacred Heart. "There's a lot of satisfaction when you write a Mass setting for a choir which then learns, practises and performs it and it sounds great below," said John.

John thinks that over the years, the congregation has become



more participatory. “I really notice when I’m down in the seats, people sing along. Certain things are sung more heartily than others. At the recent Chrism Mass I was delighted when they kept my Mass settings for the blessing of the Holy Oils, the congregation just followed Jo (Joanne Bonazza) the Cantor and they picked it up straight away. It was a really nice feeling,” said John.

Rather than have the choir members carry heavy green Missals and the new books, which didn’t have all the Responsorial Psalms in them, John took it on himself to create settings for every Sunday psalm of the three-year lectionary cycle, as well as seasonal psalms; an achievement he is very proud of. In his retirement he plans to send samples of these settings to publishers. “There is real satisfaction in doing that and knowing that they work,” he said.

John has seen a lot of change in the Diocese of Sandhurst over the years and has enjoyed the support of four Bishops. He was responsible for liturgical Music at the Installation Masses of Bishop Noel Daly, Bishop Joseph Grech, Bishop Leslie Tomlinson and Bishop Shane Mackinlay; and at the Vigil and Requiem Masses for Bishop Bernard Stewart, Bishop Noel Daly and Bishop Joseph Grech.

John fondly remembers the Bishops he has worked with. He recalls making a request for funds to repair the organ, to which the Bishop of the time replied cryptically, ‘I love what you’re doing with the choir.’ “I wonder if the organ might have been fixed straight away if the Bishop didn’t like what the choir was doing!” laughed John. (The organ was repaired eventually and in 2010, 42 bombarde pipes were installed giving a “depth and clarity” to the organ).

At another time, John recounts rehearsing for the 1982 Centenary of Henry Backhaus celebrations, when Bishop Noel Daly, who had shown John no signs of interest in music; suddenly turned up at rehearsals with the Nuncio by his side. “He introduced us, and then as they were leaving, Bishop Daly began to explain to the Nuncio all about the Mass setting we were singing, who the composer was, the history of the composer and, so on.” A baffling and amusing experience for John.

One of the many memorable Masses for John personally, was Bishop Bernard Stewart’s Funeral Mass. Bishop Stewart retired for some months prior to John commencing at the Cathedral but was still rather particular about the music played there. Perhaps it was because he confirmed John when he was a child that Bishop Stewart took a special interest in John’s work. “Bishop Stewart chose the music he wanted for his funeral and we practised it

many times over the years, because every now and then, Bishop Stewart got really sick and we thought we just can’t turn that on in a moment’s notice; but then — for Bishop Joe’s funeral, we just did.”

There have been so many highlights and remarkable moments in John’s long career that there are too many to list here. It’s interesting that he says it’s not always the big events that are highlights, sometimes the smaller celebrations can be deeply moving on a personal level.

John’s advice to anyone considering a path in liturgical music is to “Get in and enjoy it thoroughly. Don’t just play and conduct, sing also. Find yourself a good group and if you find a parish to work with, don’t always ask them for permission to do things, just do it,” he said.

“It’s important to join relevant professional associations and keep your reading up,” he said, “I belong to the National Association of Pastoral Musicians in America, I receive their journal and I went to one of their annual conferences in Indianapolis where there were 3000 people; 800 people went to the Catholic Mass; there were people from everywhere, it was a real eye-opener,” he said.

“For many many years I went every year to the Royal School of Church Music Summer School, and I built a network with Choir Masters and Directors of Music from the Anglican and United Church worlds. I’ve enjoyed the connections built up over the years,” said John.

For John, enjoying the camaraderie of choir members, seeing his students, such as Paul Taylor grow and develop into fine musicians, hearing a young organist say it was John who inspired them to play the organ, the friendships he has formed in the Diocese and the appreciation people have shown to him are all things he values. He was deeply moved when Catholic Education Sandhurst’s Council for the Arts created two scholarships for choir members, one named after Rev. Henry Backhaus, the other after Mr John Hogan.

In his retirement, John plans to catch up with all the things he’s wanted to do but hasn’t had time for, including travel when restrictions ease. But for now — “I’m very happy and very comfortable joining the congregation at Mass and listening from the pews,” he said.



SOCIAL JUSTICE

JUSTICE DEANERY MEETINGS



2020 got off to a great start with well-supported meetings in Shepparton, Bendigo and Wangaratta. The meetings had a wide-ranging agenda beginning with workshopping the Project Compassion 2020 materials then looking at the various justice agencies of our church and their role in highlighting, and inspiring action on, issues including Climate, Justice, Modern Slavery, Refugees, and Aboriginal Reconciliation.

At the Bendigo gathering, Bishop Shane complimented the diocese on its social justice activity and thanked those present for their commitment and enthusiasm.

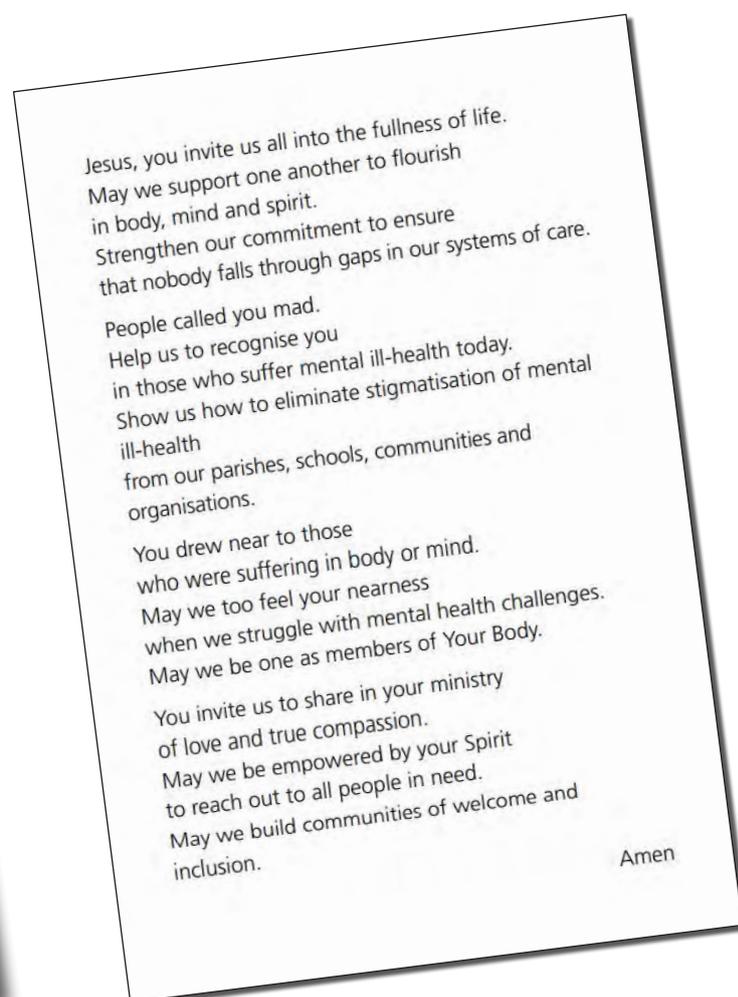
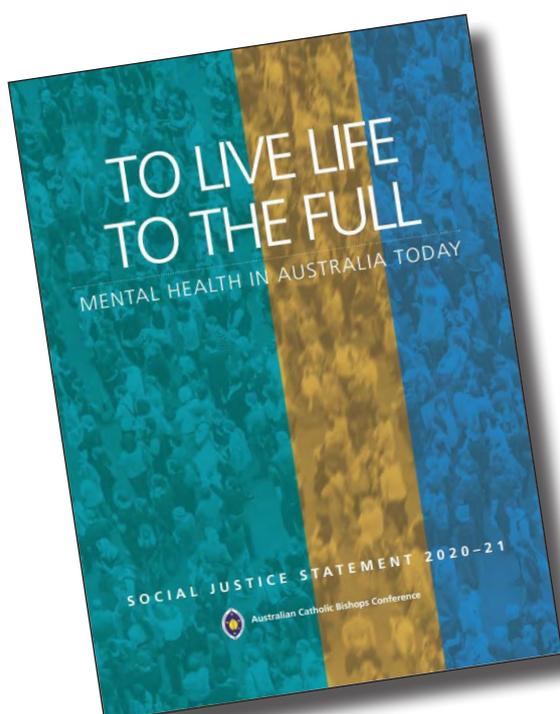
Bishop Shane Mackinlay was pleased to see Aboriginal Message Sticks on display in most parishes.

SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY 30 August 2020

“TO LIVE LIFE TO THE FULL: MENTAL HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA TODAY”

The Catholic Church in Australia has celebrated ‘Social Justice Sunday’ for 80 years. For almost every year since 1940, the bishops have developed a Social Justice Statement.

The theme for the Catholic Bishops Social Justice Statement was mental health. The statement aimed to encourage faith communities, governments and individuals to make mental health a priority; to be more attentive to the needs of people in their communities; and to welcome and show understanding towards people with mental illness.



CARITAS PROJECT COMPASSION “GO FURTHER”

The theme of Project Compassion was “Go further together” and we certainly were called to go further together as the pandemic struck and Project Compassion morphed into the COVID-19 Appeal.



The launch of Project Compassion at Hargreaves Mall Bendigo drew a large crowd. Eight school choirs performed, so there were many parents and grandparents who created such a large crowd that the passers-by stopped as well!

Cr Margaret O'Rourke, Mayor of the City of Greater Bendigo set the scene perfectly identifying with the children as she told them that she went to Holy Rosary in White Hills and that's where she got her first Project Compassion Box. Deputy Mayor Matt Emond also explained he went to St Kilian's Primary in Bendigo, so also grown up with Caritas. Naturally there was a shout out for both of them.

The pancake chefs churned out over 1000 pancakes. And the roving teams from Catherine McAuley College Bendigo did a great job distributing pancakes far and wide. “They're free if you take a brochure but we are accepting donations!”

NOTRE DAME COLLEGE – ‘PUSH UP FOR A HAND UP’

Notre Dame College Shepparton didn't let isolation stop them from standing in solidarity with our global community. Instead of doing their usual Caritas Ks walk, they held a virtual event, ‘Push Up for a Hand Up’ – doing something tough for those who are doing it tough!

Each student was encouraged to obtain sponsorship and send videos of themselves doing push-ups. The number of push-ups was tallied for each of the six Houses – recording over 35,000 push-ups! Throughout the event, School Captains hosted two hours of live-streamed entertainment including interviews with Caritas Australia CEO Kirsty Robertson, Bishop Shane and Kerry Stone, Sandhurst Caritas Coordinator – a wonderful display of leadership in action.



ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, COBRAM - CARITAS Ks BUCKETATHON

St Joseph's Primary School in Cobram did not let COVID-19 restrictions or bad weather stop them from holding their Caritas Ks event on the last day of Term Two, after a postponement of the original date. Undeterred by rain, the whole school carried buckets of water around the inside perimeter of the school in solidarity with those who walk, on average, six kilometres every day for water. A meaningful action at any time, but particularly when we were continually being reminded to wash our hands frequently with soap and water. Walking in solidarity with those who have no soap and only dirty water is truly kilometres for compassion.



Ms Kerry Stone
Diocesan Coordinator
Caritas/Justice Office

SANDHURST CARE FOR CREATION

On 24 May 2020, we commenced the Fifth Anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical "On Care for Our Common Home" (*Laudato si'*). Pope Francis extended an invitation for us to fully participate in the Season for Creation. The season commenced on 1 September, on the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and finished on 4 October, on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology.

In preparation for the Season for Creation, Bishop Shane launched a diocesan 'Care for Creation Statement'. The statement was built on Pope Francis' *Laudato si'* with the aim to encourage a greater appreciation of creation and a deeper understanding of our responsibility for its care.

Prepared by a team formed from the Adult Faith Education Reference Group, the statement was launched with slide presentations and resources to assist Parishes to "care for our common home."

When he introduced the Statement, Bishop Shane Mackinlay provided context

Five years ago, Pope Francis issued the first encyclical that he had himself initiated (after completing an earlier encyclical that was begun by Pope Benedict XVI). The topic he chose was On Care for our Common Home, and he entitled it with a quote from a canticle of St Francis of Assisi, the figure who he chose as inspiration and guide when he was elected pope.

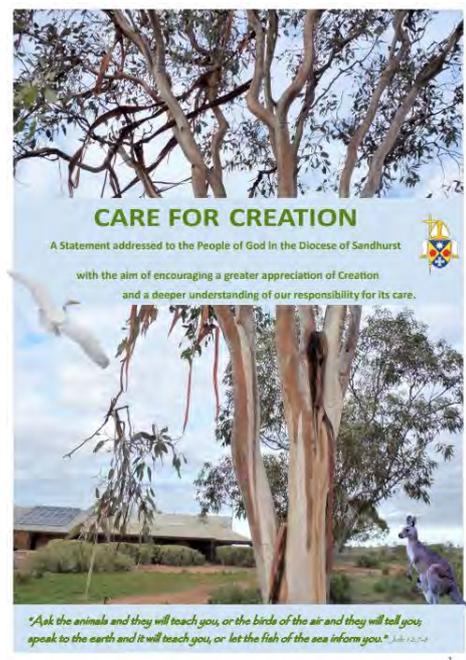
Laudato si' is a truly prophetic document, calling us to renew our awareness of and care for God's creation as the common home that we share with all living creatures and also with future generations.

The Season of Creation is normally focused on organising prayer services, community actions such as litter clean-ups, and advocacy actions; in 2020 it was necessarily more reflective.

Our Sandhurst Diocese is a community whose members have valuable insights: first Australians, who have cared for the land through generations; older parishioners who lived simply and wasted little through difficult times; and young people and their families who are well informed and passionately committed to caring for the environment.

Our rural parishes are used to engaging cooperatively with other community groups. With the worldwide Church, the Catholic Church in Sandhurst is called to show leadership through shared wisdom, responsible decision making, good practice in a context of prayer and a spirituality that knows "The entire material universe speaks of God's love ... (*Laudato Si* 8).

Sandhurst Care for Creation Statement



CATHOLIC EARTHCARE CONVOCATION

In 2020 Catholic Earthcare Convocation was held online making it even more accessible to Sandhurst Parishioners. Convocation included formation sessions, which focused on the theological and moral imperative to take care of our common home. Foundation sessions explored the financial, economic, political and social spheres which influence our common home and Action sessions looked at the transformative ways in which we can realise the need to care for creation.

Sandhurst Social Justice Coordinator Kerry Stone was on the closing session panel, and was asked what aspect of Convocation

had the biggest impact on her. Kerry replied, "The whole world of economics has never been an area of interest for me but, of course, it's so intimately entwined with our environment that I'm now taking notice! The economy and finance sessions made a big impact on me." It was hugely encouraging to hear the economic argument against fossil fuels which I had an inkling of but was so clearly presented here. Tim Buckley's words, "Coal is a dying technology... it's a wealth hazard!" will stay with me as will Ross Garnaut explaining, "Australia has the potential to be an economic superpower of the future post-carbon world".

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

The Diocese of Sandhurst acknowledges and deeply respects the spiritual beliefs and traditions of Aboriginal people. Sandhurst Social Justice aims to have:

- a Message Stick permanently displayed in every parish;
- acknowledgement of original custodians on every Parish Bulletin; and
- acknowledgement of original custodians at the commencement of all meetings.

Catholic Primary Schools in the Diocese have implemented the FIRE Carrier program designed to promote respect, fairness and inclusion for Aboriginal people. Each school has a FIRE Carrier covenant and commissions FIRE carriers to promote enculturation and reconciliation.

In 2020 the theme for NAIDOC week was 'Always was Always Will be.' Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Naidoc Week was postponed from July to November.

In 2020 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



FIRE Carriers at St Mary's Primary School in Mooroopna.

Sunday was celebrated with the theme 'Together in Spirit', in the midst of COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter protests.

Unfortunately, a National Reconciliation Mass for Catholic Education at St Kilian's, was delayed until May 2021.

MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

In 2020, 106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees was celebrated on 27 November. Pope Francis' titled his annual message 'Forced like Jesus to flee' to focus on the pastoral care of internally displaced people, while understanding there are those who are feeling 'displaced' as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

On Palm Sunday, Mass celebrated by Bishop Shane Mackinlay was live-streamed from St Kilian's in Bendigo. Homilist Fr Junray Rayna focused on empathy with those who are unable to be with people who matter to them, like refugees, like Jesus.

On Palm Sunday parishioners were invited to join people from all faiths for an online rally, organised by the Refugee Advocacy Network.

In the Diocese of Sandhurst parishioners with an interest in advocacy for the rights and welfare of migrants and refugees have the opportunity to join Rural Australians for Refugees, which is under the National Refugee Advocacy Network.

While the values of RAR members are formed by a range of beliefs and philosophies, the response of Catholic members is shaped by Catholic Social teaching. RAR provides an umbrella for Catholics in the Diocese of Sandhurst to pursue their values and passion in this area.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY

The Diocese of Sandhurst is a member of the Victorian and Tasmanian Modern Slavery Taskforce which aims to encourage and assist the Church in Victoria and Tasmania to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking by developing slavery-free supply chain strategies in all Church agencies; providing anti-slavery education and engagement initiatives; and ensuring welfare services and justice are available for all human trafficking survivors.

In 2020 the Catholic Education Office committed to slavery-free staffrooms in an endeavour to live by the values expressed in *Laudato si'*, that "purchasing is always a moral and not simply an economic act."



"Purchasing is always a moral and not simply an economic act."

Pope Francis *Laudato Si'* #206 2015.

BISHOP JOE GRECH

28 December was the tenth anniversary of the death of Bishop Joseph Angelo Grech, the sixth Bishop of Sandhurst (27 April 2001 – 28 December 2010).

Known affectionately as Bishop Joe, he was much loved across the Diocese for his animated Homilies, passionate prayers, sense of fun; and perhaps more than anything else, his friendliness and ability to make others feel welcomed and valued. “Hello my friend,” was his everyday greeting.

Given the high esteem and affection bestowed on Bishop Joe by the people of Sandhurst, it is not surprising that close to 5000 people gathered to pay tribute at his Funeral Mass on 6 January 2011. In 2020 Bishop Shane Mackinlay had planned to hold an appropriately significant celebration but, as with many plans of the ‘year that never was’, plans could not be fully implemented, and a smaller celebration was put in place.

On 27 December, at the 11.00 a.m. Sunday Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Monsignor Frank Marriott gave a poignant and humorous Homily remembering Bishop Joe. After the Mass, Bishop Shane Mackinlay led prayers for Bishop Joe and gave thanks for his ministry. It was a solemn and well-attended ceremony at the crypt.

Born in Malta on 10 December 1948, Bishop Joe moved to Melbourne in 1970 to study for the priesthood. He was ordained a priest in his hometown of Balzen on 30 November 1974 and returned to serve as a priest in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

In 1998 he was ordained as auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, he was appointed Bishop of Sandhurst on 8 March 2001, and was installed on 27 April 2001.

Bishop Joe was very much at home in the prayerful charismatic parishes of the western suburbs of Melbourne. He had never visited Bendigo, or much of the Diocese of Sandhurst before he was appointed Bishop

Monsignor Marriott in his Homily explained

This city-bred person, with continental tastes, lover of crowds, eager to engage, found himself, like Abraham, having obeyed and journeyed to where he did not know.

Charismatic inclined, demanding responses, we ever slow to add our AMEN to his many invitations. He welcomed, we moved slowly; and the two cultures began to appreciate each others’ goodness.

Bishop Joe was the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) delegate for Youth, Young Adults and Migrants and Refugees; causes close to his passionate heart. Bishop Joe campaigned to establish pastoral services in remote detention centres.

In Sandhurst, he embraced the responsibilities of a diocesan bishop with a consultative and collaborative style. He built on and strengthened structural changes initiated by Bishop Daly; then added some initiatives of his own, including a review of Religious Education, the reform of Special Education, the further development of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, and various Youth Ministry and Adult Faith programs.

Bishop Joe’s willingness to tackle the shortage of priests with gusto has greatly benefited the Diocese and will continue to do so well into the future.

Bishop Joe developed a friendship with Cardinal Vidal of Cebu and the two bishops worked to develop educational opportunities at Corpus Christi College for Filipino seminarians. The plan being, after Ordination, they would work as Priests in the Diocese of Sandhurst. “We enjoy the fruit of those decisions today. The presence of the young Filipino men is encouraging some of our home-grown youth to consider priesthood!” said Monsignor Marriott in his Homily.

Bishop Joe grew to love the country and the people of Sandhurst; and the people of Sandhurst grew to love Bishop Joe, perhaps because he understood them and the Church. He gave fuel to their many lit matches, best explained using Bishop Joe’s own words

There are so many selfless and courageous people who are actively involved in our church organisations ...

There are so many people who are constantly encouraging and giving hope to those around them ...

It is enough for someone to light a match. Many lit matches provide enough light for all to keep moving forward ...

I salute you and I thank you.

Bishop Joseph Angelo Grech
on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, 2008

“Joe had a great love for youth – they responded to him; World Youth Days and Rallies energised him; and his mantra ‘**God does not make rubbish**’ found many a listening ear and heart!”

Monsignor Frank Marriott.

“He has had a great impact in my life; in the way I preach and teach; the passion I have to love people and to serve people and to give them Jesus. This I really saw, and I learned through the life of Bishop Joe ...

He really loved Jesus, and I, with all of my heart, wanted to love Jesus like he loved Jesus!”

Fr Rob Galea

“Bishop Joe was very charismatic, passionate, personable and down-to-earth. He was a lot of fun. For example, once when Fr Rob Galea sang “God does not Make Rubbish,” the song he wrote about Bishop Joe, Bishop Joe joined Fr Rob on stage and sang with him!”

Debbie Friedlieb, St Brendan’s Parish, Shepparton

“Bishop Joe gave each of us a big hug, as he bubbly said with his unforgettable smile, ‘**Welcome my friends!**’ ”

Fr Junjun Amaya,
on arriving in Australia and meeting Bishop Joe for the first time.



27 December, Bishop Shane Mackinlay led prayers for Bishop Joe at the crypt in Sacred Heart Cathedral.

SR CATHY DEAN RSJ *6 June 1955 ~ 23 July 2020*



In early 2020, Sr Catherine Anne Dean rsj was elected to the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart Regional Leadership Team of Victoria/Tasmania; in February she was liaising with St Joseph's Primary School, Numurkah to determine the best way to distribute funds donated to the Catholic Religious Australia Drought Appeal. In July, after thirty-three years of ministry in her Religious profession, Sr Cathy went to God.

Her journey to professed life started as a lay missionary when as a qualified mothercraft nurse, she worked as House Mother to young Aboriginal girls at the remote Pallottine Mission in Tardun, Western Australia. She was a "vibrant and alive young woman, open to whatever lay ahead for her," said fellow lay missionary Cheryl Sullivan.

Sr Cathy felt a special calling to missionary life. She entered religious life in May 1985 and was professed in June 1988. While ministering in communities across Victoria she completed a Diploma of Ministry, (Clinical Pastoral Experience) and a Bachelor of Social Science (Pastoral Studies). She then embarked on life as a missionary, living and working with the

women of the Pueblo in Pitumarca, a small community in the Andes. "I have several vivid memories of Cathy dancing for hours in Peruvian celebrations. She brought a joy, care and laughter to all she did," said fellow Josephite Sr Katrina Brill of this time.

After returning to Australia, Sr Cathy worked in various ministries across Victoria. In recent years, Sr Cathy ministered in Numurkah, and Shepparton where she became a "treasured Josephite." "She was a bright and valuable member of our conference," said a fellow member of the Numurkah Conference of St Vincent de Paul.

"I loved seeing Cathy working away as a volunteer in Eco Park, Shepparton. She was treasured by the young adults and staff at Shepparton Access," said Principal of St Luke's Primary School Shepparton, David Keenan.

In an online tribute to Sr Cathy, fellow Josephite, Sr Geraldine Larkins rsj wrote

*Cathy could light up a room with her smile
and made all our lives a bit brighter and happier.*

"Cathy you shared your love of life and of all God's people. Your smile was a gift to us all. Continue laughing and dancing with your God," wrote Sr Niesha Allport rsj.

SR ANNE CLOONEY FCJ *22 April 1926 ~ 19 November 2020*



The sight of Sr Anne Cooney FCJ busily riding her bicycle around Benalla in the 1980s brought a smile and sense of goodness in the world to the people of the town. Later, Sr Anne again became an icon at Benalla's Cooina Nursing home, riding her mobility scooter to take communion to the house-bound, smiling, waving and chatting to people along the way.

Sr Anne Cooney "was born to be a sister," said her brother Bill, but the pathway there was not straight

forward for Sr Anne. Despite initially unsupportive parents, at the age of 23, Joyce Kathleen Cooney entered the Novitiate at FCJ Genazzano Convent and took the name Anne. She made her first vows two years later but, to her great disappointment, she was asked to leave the Society in 1957, just prior to making her final vows.

With grit and determination Sr Anne kept the promise of her first vows – to live her whole life for Jesus, her faithful companion. She re-entered the convent in 1962 and was professed in 1970.

Sr Anne's artistic, creative and musical talents were perhaps not fully appreciated in post-war pre-Vatican II Australia but, as times changed, her gifts came to be truly appreciated and Sr Anne blossomed.

In some ways she was ahead of her time, holding art classes and starting musical bands, for marginalised people in disadvantaged communities – what we now would call 'art therapy', no doubt giving a means of expression, personal fulfilment and validation to those with little means to do so.

Wherever there was a need, Sr Anne was ready to answer that need. She worked tirelessly in outreach programs in the Parish of Sts Peter and Paul in South Melbourne and spent time as a missionary in Maasin in the Philippines.

Giving the eulogy for Sr Anne, fellow FCJ sister, Sr Elizabeth Brown said

Anne was never one for pomp and ceremony. She lived very simply and was profoundly and deeply in love with Jesus, her companion. This was often expressed in her paintings, especially in the illustrations that are in her bible placed before us in the sacred space today.

Her spirituality was simple and uncomplicated – loving Jesus, loving and serving the poor, doing this with Mary at her side.

Her trust in God loving her completely gave her a freedom to live simply and joyfully and to go wherever she could share her gifts. What brought her joy indeed as an FCJ sister was ... to be an ambassador for Christ, walking with and being with the poorest of the poor in our society."

FR JOHN NAUGHTON 27 August 1934 ~ 2 September 2020

Rev. Fr John Naughton served the Diocese of Sandhurst as a priest for over fifty years. He was known by his fellow priests as the 'Master of Hospitality' and those who knew him at Mount Alvernia Hospital, where he was chaplain for many years, and at Ave Maria Hostel, where he celebrated Mass and lived in his latter years, as the 'gentle priest'.

Shepparton born and raised, Fr John Naughton was educated at St Colman's College, Shepparton and Assumption College Kilmore. After national service, with the support of the late Bishop Bernard Stewart, he spent time brushing up on Latin at Stanislaus College in Bathurst, before entering Francis Xavier Seminary in Adelaide.

Fr Naughton was ordained in 1965, in time to celebrate the marriages of his two younger brothers, and only two years later, the funeral Mass of his father. His brother Peter Naughton, said at Fr Naughton's Funeral Mass that his brother's Ordination changed the lives of their entire family, moving them all to a deeper understanding of their faith.

Fr Naughton served as a priest at St Kilian's Bendigo, Yarrawonga, Tatura, Sacred Heart Cathedral and Golden Square. He was chaplain at Mount Alvernia Hospital for twenty years. After he retired from formal appointments in 2009, he continued to celebrate Mass for residents of Ave Maria Hostel, where he eventually became a resident.

Fr John diligently did work that others seemingly did not want to do; photographing and digitising marriage, baptism and confirmation registers for example to update archdiocesan archives in Kew. He worked quietly doing work that was not so exciting but was important work and needed to be done.

Over the years, Fr Naughton's ministry was interrupted by ill health, no doubt making him even more compassionate towards those he was chaplain to in hospitals and aged care.

Fr Naughton went to God on 2 September 2020. His Funeral Mass was celebrated at his 'home' parish, St Brendan's Shepparton, by Bishop Shane Mackinlay and his eulogy was given by childhood family friend, Monsignor Frank Marriott.



Fr John Naughton concelebrating Mass with the late Bishop Joe Grech.

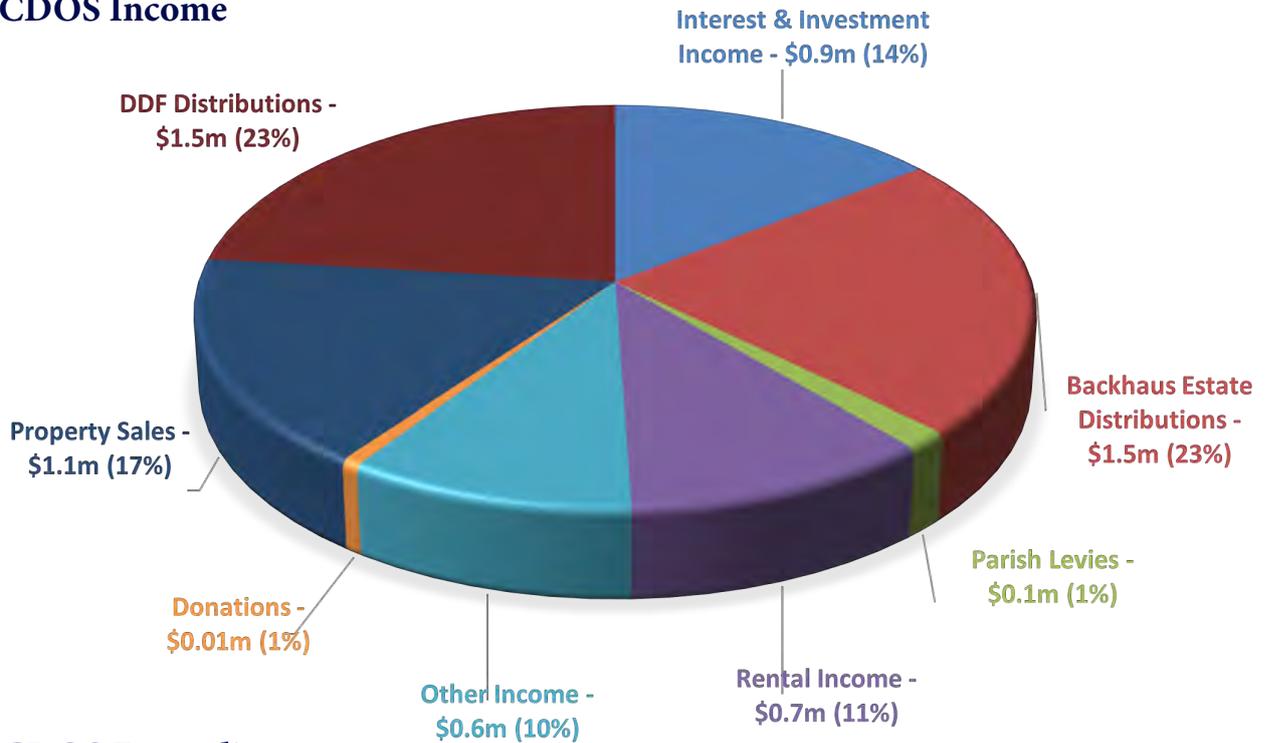
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SANDHURST

Total Income: \$6,477,005

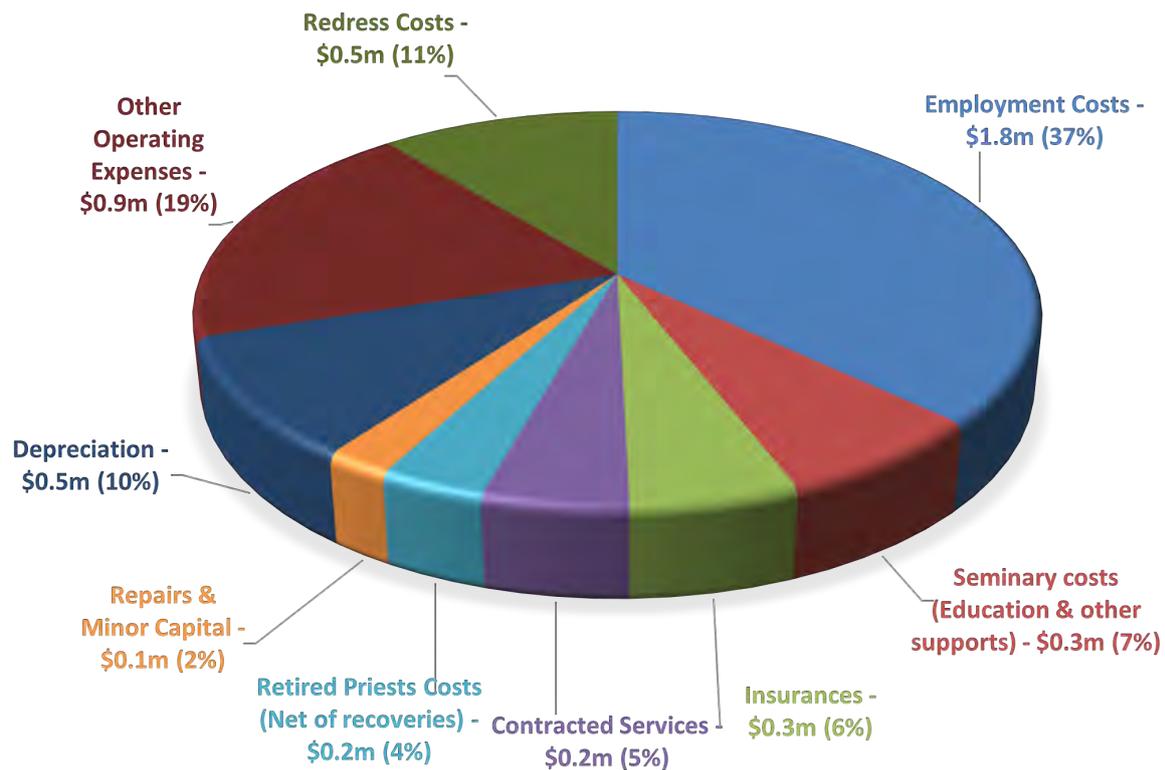
Total Expenditure: \$4,890,476

Operating Surplus: \$1,586,529

CDOS Income



CDOS Expenditure



Financial information for year ended June 30, 2020

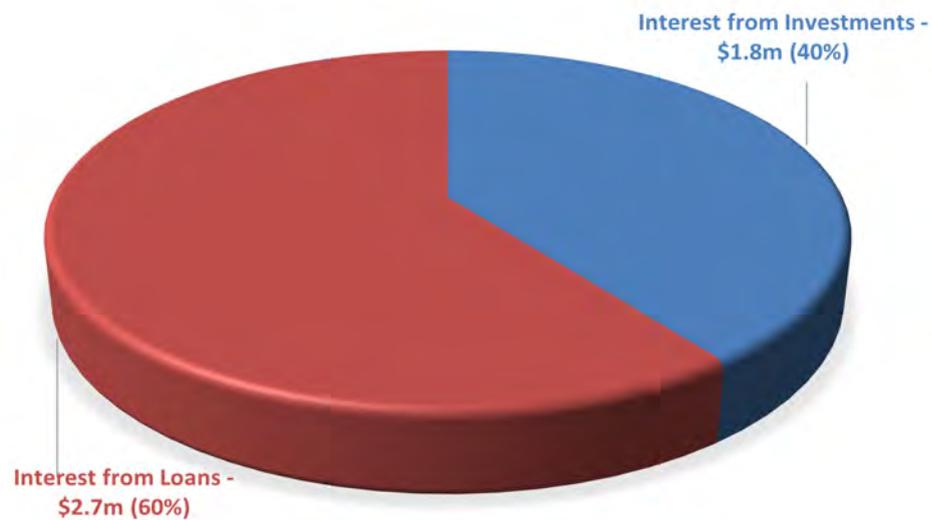
DIOCESAN DEVELOPMENT FUND

Total Income: \$4,524,420

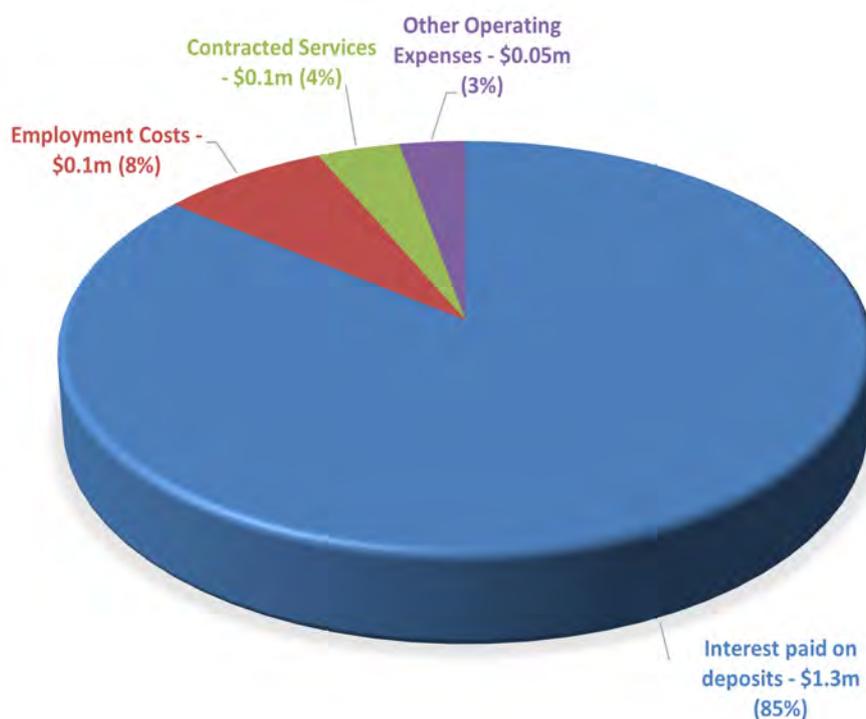
Total Expenditure: \$1,506,738

Operating Surplus: \$3,017,683

DDF Income



DDF Expenditure



Financial information for year ended June 30, 2020

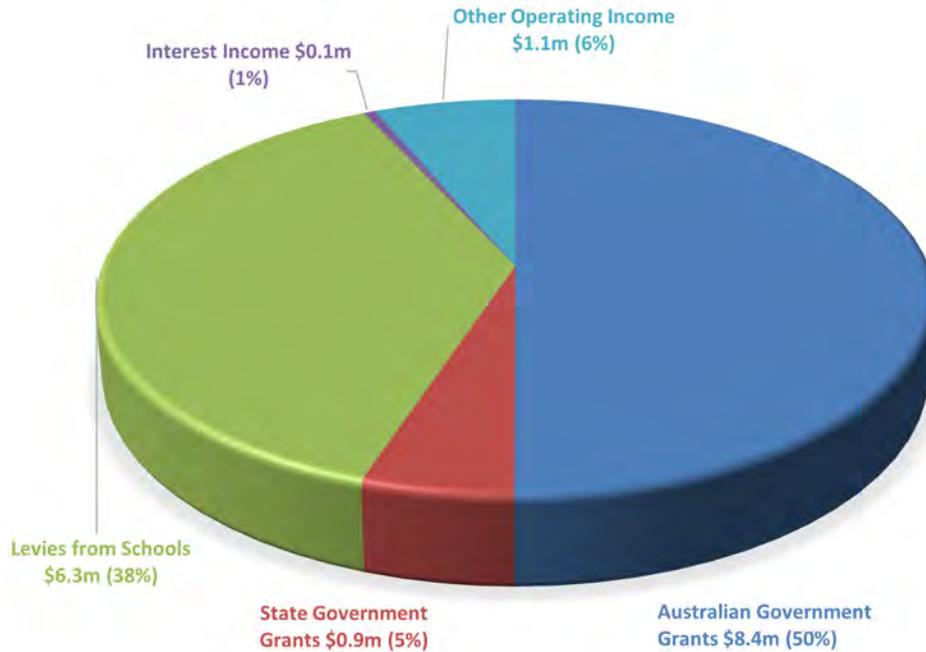
CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE SANDHURST

Total Income: \$16,789,215

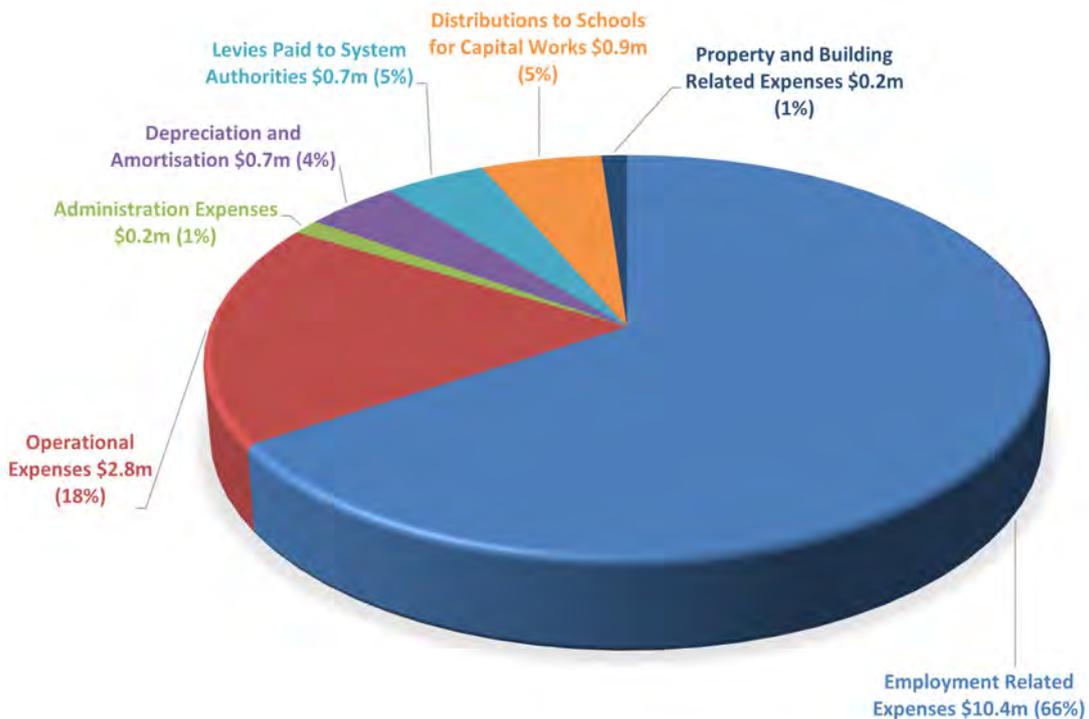
Total Expenditure: \$15,888,054

Operating Surplus: \$901,161

CEO Sandhurst Income



CEO Sandhurst Expenditure



Financial information for year ended 31 December 2020

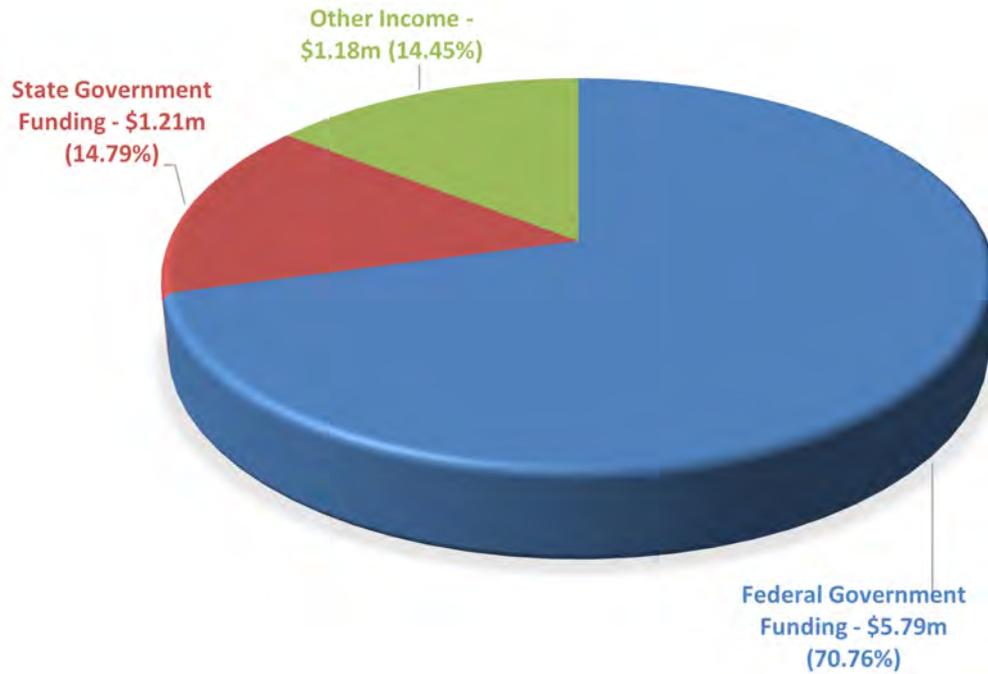
CATHOLICCARE SANDHURST

Total Income: \$8,180,685

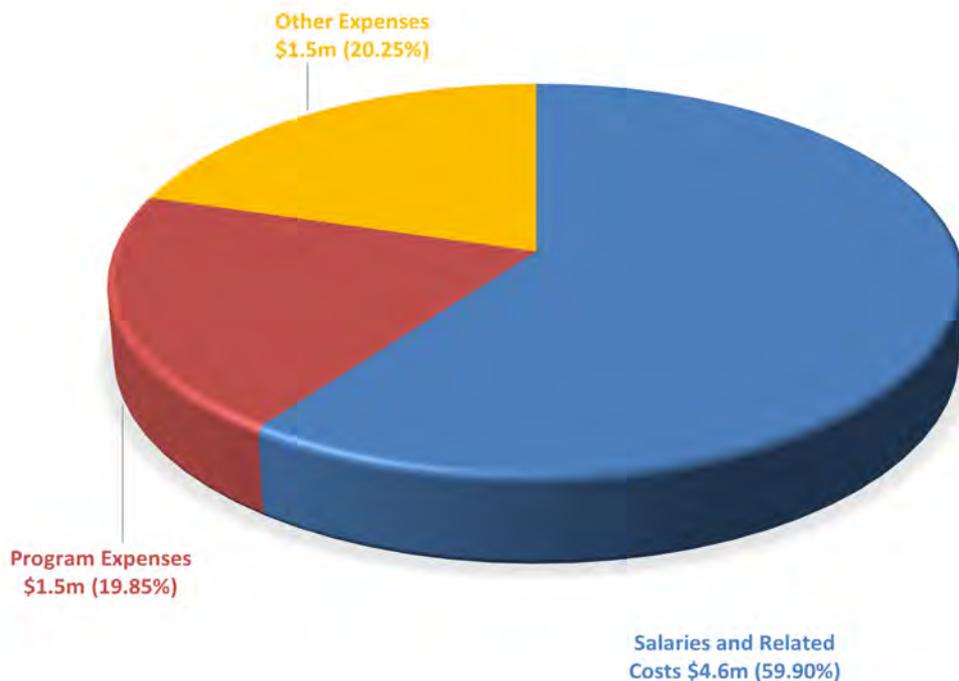
Total Expenditure: \$7,659,090

Operating Surplus: \$ 521,595

CatholicCare Sandhurst Income



CatholicCare Sandhurst Expenditure



Financial information for year ended June 30, 2020



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SANDHURST