



**AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS:** Because of the need to pen this copy the day before Australia Day actually occurs, I am unable to comment on that day's very special activities. A verbal report will be given at the end of Mass. However, by the time you read this bulletin, the Australia Day celebrations will be well and truly over for yet another year. Makes us (especially me) wonder where the past year went? Absolutely flew!! A more pedestrian pace this year would be good!

Tell me, did any of you actually find the site of Bell's new Magi Chapel? The Epiphany walkers have taken on a major commitment there. Given that it will be located within our parish, we may be able to support them in some practical way. Let's see what the future holds in that regard. Whatever else, we are so grateful to Diana and Joe for once again opening up their magnificent "Withycombe" property at Mount Wilson for us to explore and otherwise enjoy. Huge thanks to them on behalf of all parishioners and visitors who attended, and also for the wonderful hospitality with which they spoil us.

**SCHOOL'S IN:** Quite extraordinary how quickly the six week Christmas school holidays have passed, vanished into the ether it sometimes seems. Left behind, of course, are plenty of great memories for us upon which to reflect. Now it's back to the grind - another year of learning for our young people as they negotiate all the challenges that this year has in store for them.

Our catechists are also gearing up for another year of dedicated service to God and students, ensuring that the spiritual education of our youth keeps pace with the ever-increasing demands of a hectic, largely secular life in which our Lord features very little, if at all. Our catechist co-ordinator, Claire Maguire, URGENTLY needs either trained SRE's (religious education teachers) or unskilled volunteers to be trained into that role by this parish and the Parramatta Diocese, I might add at our cost, not yours! So, should you have a spare hour or two of a Thursday morning when schools are 'in', and desire to find out more about this most satisfying and fulfilling work involving our children, please contact Claire Maguire at your earliest convenience on 4787 7635. The need for religious education, particularly these days in our parish, is critical for the survival of our faith in our precious children who are able to attend only public primary schools of which there are three in this district. As the first of four terms this year commences tomorrow with religious education to commence in a couple of weeks, our need for more volunteers is, as earlier stated, very URGENT.

**FINALLY, A FEW DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:** Last evening we held our first Parish Council meeting (24/1); schools return tomorrow (30/1); World Day of Sick Mass at St Patrick's Blacktown (9/2 @ 10.30am); annual Garage Sale (11 & 12/2); Blue Mountains Priests Deanery Meeting at Hazelbrook (15/2); Finance Committee Meeting (15/2 @ 4pm); Parish Council Meeting (23/2 @ 7pm); Shrove Tuesday (28/2); Ash Wednesday (1/3); Autumn Ember Day (3/3); St Patrick's Feast Day (17/3); St Joseph's Feast Day (19/3); Feast of the Annunciation (25/3); Daylight Savings Ends (2/4); Schools - first term ends (7/4); Palm Sunday (9/4); Chrism Mass at Parramatta (12/4); Holy Thursday - Mass of Lord's Supper (13/4); Good Friday - Stations of the Cross/Ecumenical Service/Passion of the Lord/ Sunset Liturgy (14/4); Easter Saturday - Easter Vigil Mass 15/4); Easter Sunday Masses - Mt Victoria (7am)/ Blackheath (9.30am)/ Megalong Valley (11.30am); ANZAC DAY (Tuesday 25/4); Schools - second term starts (26/4).

**God Bless! Fr Bob**

*Palms Encounters: An experience to share this Easter and beyond: A Palms Encounter is an intimate, immersive, inter-cultural experience providing insights that challenge perceptions and deepen understanding. Palms long-term volunteers guide the Encounter with our Catholic Communities in East Timor. Register now: 2-14 April Encounter and receive \$400 off a 2nd ticket. Call Roger 9560 5333 or go to [www.palms.org.au/Encounters](http://www.palms.org.au/Encounters) for more info. Real encounter, real people, real exchange, real life.*

**NEW FACES IN OUR NEIGHBOURING PARISH:** St Patrick's Parish, Lithgow has a new Parish Priest—**Fr Garry McKeown**, former Parish Priest of Orange. There is also a new Principal at La Salle Academy. Her name is **Mrs Joyce Smith**, formerly of St Catherine's Catholic College at Singleton. We send them both a very warm welcome.

**Benedictine Spirituality Morning:** Friday, 3 Feb, 10am to midday at the Good Samaritan Community House, 3 Valley Rd, Wentworth Falls. There will be morning prayer, silent time in the garden, morning tea and a discussion on Ch. 6 "**Balance**" in **Seeking God** by Esther De Waal. New participants are very welcome. Enq: Sr Jacinta 4757 2290

Please keep in your prayers **Fr George O'Mara**, PP of Cranebrook, who is in hospital for major surgery next week.

Please pray for the sick and their carers: **Barry Bowden; Madge Boylan; Margaret Clancy; John and Marion Crowley; Paul Kalmar; Kevin Madden and Philia Portelli.**

**SOCIAL CLUB NEWS**  
Our annual **Garage Sale** is fast approaching. Dates for this fundraiser are as follows:  
**SETTING UP & SORTING**  
Thu 9 Feb 1.30pm-3.30pm & Fri 10 Feb 9.30am-3.30pm  
**GARAGE SALE**  
Sat 11 Feb 7.30am-4pm & Sun 12 Feb 9am-12pm  
*We ask all parishioners and friends to get busy cleaning out unwanted items to donate. These can be left at the parish hall in January. If you have larger items that you would like picked up, please contact Marilyn 0414 536 601 to arrange a time suitable.*

**AFTERNOON CAPERS** will be on Wed, **1st Feb** at 12pm at **The Tarana Hotel**, Tarana. If you need a lift, please phone Diane on 4787 1357. All welcome.

**Happy 11th Birthday**  
**Jęrzęmy Iillis** for 30th January

**Pilgrimage Information Session:**  
**Sunday 12 March ~ 2.30pm to 5.00pm**  
Fr Wim Hoekstra, Parish Priest of St Michael's Parish, Baulkham Hills, is accompanying a pilgrimage '**Of Celtic Saints, English Martyrs and Aussie Links**'. The pilgrimage to **Ireland, Scotland and England** departs **25 September** returning **25 October**.  
Some of the saints are:  
John Henry Newman, Patrick, Oliver Plunkett, Catherine McAuley, Columba, Mary MacKillop, Hilda of Whitby, Venerable Bede and Thomas Becket. English martyrs Margaret Clitheroe, Edmund Campion and John Fisher. Places include Birmingham, Stratford-upon-Avon, Oxford, Glastonbury, Dublin, Knock, Fort William, Iona, Holy Island (Lindisfarne), Durham, York, Cambridge, Walsingham, London and Canterbury.  
**Information afternoon starts 2.30pm and ends at 5.00pm in the Downey Room, St Michael's Parish Offices, 1-3 Chapel Lane, Baulkham Hills.**  
Brochures available via e-mail to Fr Wim [wimh@parishofbaulkhamhills.org.au](mailto:wimh@parishofbaulkhamhills.org.au) or PO Box 1501, Baulkham Hills, 1755.

**Last Week's Collections — Thank You!**  
**1st: \$163.70** Pastoral Revenue (support of the Bishop and Diocesan Priests both active & retired); **2nd: \$654.65** (includes direct deposits). This money is used for local parish needs.