

## PEOPLE OF THE PARISH: AMY YU



If you've been a member of the Parish of South Yarra for any period of time in the past 50 years then you would surely have come across one of its most effervescent members, Ms Amy Yu. A sprightly lady with an infectious sense of humour, Amy has been very active member of the Parish of South Yarra for more than five decades.

Originally from Hong Kong, Amy arrived in Melbourne as a 17-year-old and completed her studies in Music at Melbourne University before moving into South Yarra to flat with a girlfriend. One day she wandered into the St Joseph's Church and met Fr Gallagher who found out she was a musician and astutely asked her to play the organ for Mass the following Sunday. Fifty years on, Amy is STILL playing the organ at both St Joseph's and St Thomas! "I told Fr Gallagher I was a pianist, not an organist, especially on the Fincham organ built for St Joseph's in the 1880s, but somehow I was good enough and that is all that was needed." Amy laughs.

A talented musician and teacher for many years, Amy is also a gifted painter with a particular passion in iconography. She learned this specific and unusual painting technique many years ago, almost quite by accident. "In the 1980s I was attending a Christian Meditation group at St Peter's Anglican Church in East Melbourne when I was introduced to the Vicar who was also an iconographer," Amy explains. "And I felt that God had prepared me to meet and work with him. The group would pray before the class and we would ask God to use us as instruments and to bless the materials we worked with to reflect his glory,"

Writing icons, as it is known, is a painstakingly slow and dedicated artistic and spiritual process. It requires many hours of working with natural products such as wood and linen, symbolic of Jesus' cross and the shroud he was wrapped in after his death. "Every stage is deeply symbolic. I have written many icons in my life and it's a labour of love," says Amy. "One, of the Baptism of Jesus, took 18 months to write and it was given to the church to thank God for giving me the gifts of music and art, This specific icon hung above St Joseph's Baptismal font for a number of years; however, about fifteen years ago it was stolen and never recovered."

Amy is also one of the parishioners who, over the years, has been a foundation member in many important programs that the parish runs today. These include being a member of the Liturgy Committee; the Augustinian Friends; taking Communion to the patients in the Alfred Hospital; serving in the parish Food Store and helping on the Bread Run, collecting bread donations from local bakeries and making it available to people in need through the Food Store which helps many of the people in need in our community.

Amy sees her various works as part of her commitment to God. "We are the Church and it is up to us to make the Church function in all of these important ways. We have to get involved, to keep the good works of the parish going. It is about Jesus' message to us: "I am in your midst as one who serves." Otherwise our Church will not function."

Amy hopes to continue to her involvement in the parish as long as she can and she encourages other members to get involved. She is a shining example of true faith and commitment.

*Rachael McKenzie Meckel*