



FROM THE AUGUSTINIANS



PASTOR'S REPORT

POPE LEO XIV ENCYCLICAL: *MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS*" (THE GRANDEUR OF HUMANITY)



The advent of an Augustinian papacy through the election of Robert Prevost OSA, now Leo XIV, has brought excitement, challenge, and opportunity for the Augustinians throughout the world. No less so with the expectation of his first major doctrinal venture, namely,

the promulgation of his first encyclical, entitled "*Magnifica Humanitas*" (The Grandeur of Humanity) with the subtitle of "Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence" in May this year, a document of the significant length of some 42,000 words approximately in English.

Fundamentally it is a survey, analysis and extension of the Church's Social Teaching over a period of some 135 years and issued acknowledging the first such teaching in the time of Pope Leo XIII, "*Rerum Novarum*," a response to the disruption of society and civilization cause by the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries. Leo XIV argues that, after the agrarian and industrial eras, the coming of a third era, with the arrival of the digital age, ushers in an epoch-changing moment in humanity's progress with its startling possibilities for the betterment of human life, but with it, the accompanying danger of harm and exploitation. The encyclical opens with the question of a fundamental choice to be made between the Kingdom of God and the terrestrial kingdom which has

characterised the history of humanity in the thinking of St Augustine, Leo's great mentor. Following this expose the pontiff continues with a lengthy survey of the ensuing Church documents on social teaching since *Rerum Novarum* down to the present day.

Then follows a detailed reflection on the nature, the benefits and the challenges of the digital IT world and artificial intelligence in particular. In Leo's words, A.I. must be "disarmed," not only in its possible applications of military weapons of mass destruction, but also in its exploitative potential among the young and the vulnerable.

Leo firmly establishes the dignity of the human person as stemming from humanity being created in the 'image and likeness' of God and its capacity to share God's life. The Pauline teaching that we are all members of Christ's Body, reinforces that sense of dignity and responsibility to work together, and build up the Kingdom of God on earth until we share in the fullness of that community in the eternal City of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Fr Brian Buckley OSA

ELECTION OF FR TONY BANKS OSA AUSTRALIAN PROVINCIAL.



At the recent Augustinian Provincial Chapter in Sydney Fr Tony Banks OSA was confirmed in office for the coming four year period. Fr Tony had already served as provincial for two terms before his election and appointment as Assistant General in

Rome for a twelve year period concluding in September last year. Fr Tony brings to the role an immense experience of Church and Augustinian life world-wide and in particular with the Asian Pacific region in which we reside. We wish him well in his ministry among us as a returning son and assure him of our spiritual support.

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENTS IN OUR PARISH COMMUNITY



First Communicants 2026

This year, the Parish of South Yarra was blessed to accompany three children on their faith journey as they received the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. It was a joy to witness their spiritual growth as they

prepared through prayer, learning, and the support

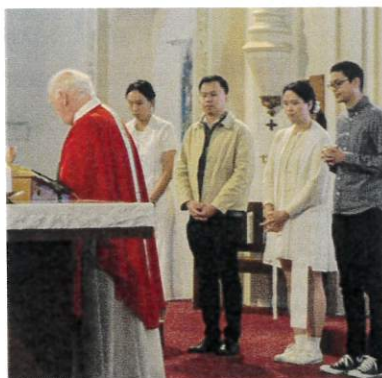
of their families and the parish community. These special celebrations reminded us all of the importance of nurturing faith in our young people and walking alongside them as they deepen their relationship with Christ.

Our parish also had the privilege of journeying with four adults through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) as they prepared to be welcomed into the Catholic Church. Throughout the year, participants gathered regularly to explore the richness of the Catholic faith, Scripture, prayer, the sacraments, and the life of the Church.

The RCIA program was facilitated by Fr Brian and Stefphy, with the support of a number of guest presenters who generously shared their knowledge, experiences, and personal faith journeys. These sessions provided meaningful opportunities for discussion, reflection, and learning, helping participants to develop a deeper understanding of the Catholic tradition while fostering a strong sense of belonging within our parish community.

We give thanks to everyone who contributed to these formation programs- our guest speakers, families, parishioners, and all who offered their prayers and encouragement. We congratulate our children and our new members of the Catholic Church and pray that they continue to grow in faith, hope, and love as active members of our parish family. Thank you,

Stefphy Coosnapa
(Pastoral Assistant)



RCIA Candidates & sponsors 2026

MEDITATION IS OUR WAY TO PEACE WITH GOD.

I often hear Catholics say that Christian meditation is “New Age”, “too hard”, or “full of distractions”. But Christian meditation is different. It is about seeking God in the present moment. It is not about chasing special results. It is about coming close to the Lord and opening our hearts to Him.

God wants to be close to us, even when our lives are busy. His Love is with us in our joys and our troubles, in our failures and our successes.

John Main said that meditation helps us find ourselves in the deep silence.

Let us reflect on John Main’s words:

Moment of Christ-Prayer as the Way to God’s Fullness
(John Main, 2010, p. 24)



Taking time for silence is a first step towards finding the peace of Christ. When we meditate each day, morning and evening, we begin to discover a silence that helps us become more awake and more alive.

This silence is not empty. It is filled with God’s presence. Christian prayer invites us into silence. In that silence, we become more aware of God, of ourselves, and of our connection with one another.

The most important part of a meditation group is the time we spend being silent together.

All parishioners are warmly invited to join the meditation group every Friday at 10:45 am at St Joseph’s Church.

Dr Priscilla Murphy

WELCOME FR BARRY CLIFFORD OSA

Fr Barry Clifford OSA has recently returned to his native Victoria after some 40 years away in ministry in the United Kingdom and the Augustinian Province of England and Scotland to retire in the South Yarra community.

Originally from Northern Victoria, where he still has family, Fr Barry was himself from an Augustinian parish in the Diocese of Sandhurst (Bendigo) and previously served in South Yarra as a hospital chaplain in the late 1970’s.

We welcome his return and presence among us.

Fr Brian Buckley OSA

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?

Our Parish and Social Justice - Caring for our neighbours in their needs

In many Australian parishes there's a long-standing history of people in need ringing the doorbell at parish presbyteries and convents and asking for food and/or shelter. In a parish like ours, with a convent on one side of the street and a priory opposite, there's certainly been a very long history of this happening. Desperate people in need of help....

When the Augustinians came to South Yarra in 1976, they soon became aware of the many people in need; single parent families with young children; homeless people, significantly men; people out of work and seeking a job; some families of the children in St Joseph's school; people unable to afford food for every day.

Fr Ray Mitchell, the first Augustinian Parish Priest, says that Fr John Barry O.S.A., then the Provincial of the Augustinians in Australia, encouraged the priests in South Yarra to address the issues of poverty among the people.

In the early 1980's Fr Noel Hackett opened up the old stables, then a fairly rudimentary space, to provide some overnight shelter for homeless people; they also set up a refrigerator, regularly filled with donated bread, on the priory veranda – the beginning of the ongoing bread bank which is now an essential part of the Food Store. The former church piety stall was converted to a tiny food store. It was kept in the parish hall and wheeled out on Saturday afternoons and staffed by volunteer parishioners who distributed a bag of non-perishable food, largely donated by parishioners, to people in need. There was invariably a long line-up of people grateful for this service each weekend.

Two driving people emerged at this time, who had a most significant impact on the social justice activities of the Parish of South Yarra: Fr John Barry O.S.A. and Dr David Quin

When Fr John Barry came to South Yarra in 1987 and was later appointed as Parish Priest in 1991, a

significant new direction in the life of the parish was developed, particularly with regard to lay involvement, community engagement and commitment to social justice, and in particular, in its response to the urgent need for inner suburban housing solutions and social welfare. Fr John's skill at drawing parishioners into wholehearted involvement in discussion, development of and commitment to new and needed programs for the parish was inspiring.

In 1996 Dr David Quin, a recently retired GP who had moved to South Yarra, approached Fr John with a view to being involved in parish social justice activities. David took over the task of keeping the stable clean after the overnight users. Within a short time he had organised some of his tradesmen friends to refurbish the stable into a functional unit with a kitchen, bathroom and proper sleeping arrangements, greatly improving its liveability and security. This first parish shelter was established in 1998.

Fr John and David worked together to devise plans to convert the former classrooms at 54 Fitzgerald St into



transitional housing units. A committee of volunteer parishioners was formed to bring the dream to reality. St Joseph's South Yarra Emergency Housing Association (EHASS) was formed in 1998. The Governor of Victoria, His Excellency the Honourable Sir James Gobbo AC CVO, himself a parishioner at St Thomas Aquinas church, honoured the Association by agreeing to become its patron.

This committee was the driving force in finding benefactors who would supply financial support to build and furnish the units. In 1999 there were two units, then four, and by 2004, the whole building had been converted to the current twelve units. EHASS worked with Community Housing Agencies, most significantly, *Home Ground Real Estate and Launch Housing*, to allocate the units to homeless people. One unit was tagged to be allocated to a refugee person or family.

Parishioners were invited to join EHASS , and a large volunteer group formed from within the parish and included other interested volunteers. All the work to set up and maintain the units was done by volunteers. They cleaned the public areas each week and when a unit was vacated, the volunteers would clean and prepare it for the next person or family to move in, and be welcoming to the newcomers.

After the closure of St Joseph's Primary School in 2002, the main school building was converted to the Parish Centre and included a new, permanent Food Store. Regardless of nationality or religion, local people with a Pension card or a Health Care card were (and are) welcome to come to the Food Store. Parishioners were invited to donate non-perishable foods to the Food Store, and a range of activities was organised each year to raise funds for EHASS. These included film nights at Como Cinema, parish barbeques, fun nights in the parish hall, high teas in the hall and the regular sausage sizzles at Bunnings. As well as raising much needed funds, these events were great social events, very much enjoyed by all who attended. COVID brought a temporary end to these activities, but it is hoped that they will be reintroduced in the coming months.

The transitional housing units were in constant demand and with the numbers of people coming to the Food Store for assistance increasing each year, the need to purchase food supplies expanded significantly. This then necessitated the raising of further funds to purchase food as well as to ensure the upkeep and maintenance of the units. By 2011 EHASS was aware of the increasing complexity of its services and the needs of the people, and its name and structure were changed to **St Joseph's Outreach Service Inc. – SJOS**. It was established as a separate entity from the parish, with a board to lead its deliberations.

In the early 2000's as community consciousness grew of the numbers of people in need of food and



housing support, and also the huge amounts of food being wasted at supermarkets and other retail venues, several charity agencies emerged. *Second Bite*, started around Prahran Market, became a weekly supplier of fruit and vegetables to the Food Store; visitors to the food store were most appreciative of the fresh foods made available to them. Now, *Foodfilled* has taken over the role of supplying fresh bread and produce each Saturday, and visitor's appreciation continues.

One feature of the Food Store is the bread freezer. From the fridge on the priory verandah started in the 1970s by the Augustinians, these days it is constantly supplied with bread donations from the local supermarkets, from bakeries and restaurants. Bread is available 24-hours a day for people in need. These supplies are collected and bagged up several times each week by the volunteers who make up the Bread Roster.

In 2018, conscious of the people's appreciation of the availability of fresh produce, a group of volunteers formed the SJOS Garden



SJOS Garden Club

Club in the grounds of the priory, growing fruit, vegetables and herbs, also much appreciated by the visitors to the Food Store. In 2025, 1800 bags of fruit, vegetables and herbs were given out; as well, a supply of honey, produced from the beehive in the garden, was sold to raise further funds for SJOS.

In the fifty years that these services have been available in the parish, and most significantly , in the thirty years since the inception of SJOS and its predecessor, EHASS, many people have volunteered their time and energy to the successful organisation, operation and maintenance of the work of SJOS. Thanks to their hard work and generous commitment, their financial support and their personal and professional skills and contacts, SJOS members continue to offer support to people in need, through practical, community-based services.

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR? (Cont.)



**St Joseph's
Outreach
Services**
Respect | Welcoming
Service | Integrity

SJOS continues to deliver emergency housing, a Food Store, a 24-hour bread bank and fresh food from the Harvest Garden,

as well as distributing food donated from other generous sources.

SJOS policy states that "St Joseph's Outreach Services is a volunteer organisation and all our outreach services are managed by generous people who give their time and skills to help the disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable people in the community. We are not government funded and to support the services we provide, we rely heavily on financial donations via fundraising events and private philanthropy, as well as corporate and family trust donations.

The services provided by St Joseph's Outreach Services are delivered through a dedicated team of volunteers from all walks of life and various communities, with a common goal to provide shelter, opportunity and support. There is always a need for more volunteers. Whether an hour a week, a month or a year, every hour of assistance from a volunteer supports the outreach services.

Over the past year, more than 3,000 people received help from the Food Store, while over the years many more thousands of people have been assisted in various ways."

We can be quietly proud of this ongoing service located in our parish and a hallmark of our commitment to the care of people in need. It makes a difference for many people and they are very grateful.

If you would like to volunteer to SJOS, or support the work with a donation, please go to the website: info@sjos.org.au

Di Brebner

INTRODUCING ARYANA VEGA

Operations Consultant, SJOS

I'm Aryana and I'm currently the Operations Consultant at St Joseph's Outreach Services. I come from a background in account management and international logistics, and I now enjoy using those skills to help support the day-to-day operations of SJOS.

My role is quite varied and includes supporting the operations of SJOS, working alongside volunteers,



coordinating projects and helping SJOS continue to grow and serve the community as effectively as possible. I also assist with communications and community engagement, helping share the wonderful work happening across our programs.

Outside of work, I'm passionate about community development, project management, and creating positive change. It's a privilege to be part of such a welcoming and dedicated team, and I look forward to meeting more members of our community.

Aryana Vega

ST JOSEPH'S OUTREACH SERVICES

A Volunteer's Perspective

St Joseph's Outreach Services has been providing food and accommodation services to our local (and sometimes not so local) community for over 26 years.



In the 15 years or so that I have been volunteering with SJOS, I have been involved with many tasks: fundraising and social activities, restocking of accommodation units, packing bread for the 24-hour bread freezer and in the garden, as well as regular shifts in the Food Store.

It is fair to say I have gained and learned much more than I have given. I have met some truly amazing, kind, and committed people, as I like to say "on both sides of the counter", by which I mean fellow volunteers and those who come to SJOS for help.

There is no one "type" of volunteer or client of SJOS. The people are representative of Australia, they are all ages, abilities and come from very diverse backgrounds - you never know their story, but the fact that they come together has a positive impact on our community.

We are fortunate to have this small organisation so close and, at a time when politics is becoming harder and harsher, SJOS and these people give me hope.

Donating to or volunteering with St Joseph's Outreach Services is easy and information is available at: <https://sjos.org.au>

Clare Taylor



SJOS Food Store

HISTORY

AB's HISTORY CORNER

The Parish of South Yarra has marked many golden milestones throughout its 139-year history. One of the more significant was the transfer of parish stewardship to the Order of St Augustine 50 years ago this year. During that time, the parish has been blessed with many remarkable parish priests, and it is fitting to remember the first Augustinian Parish Priest of South Yarra.



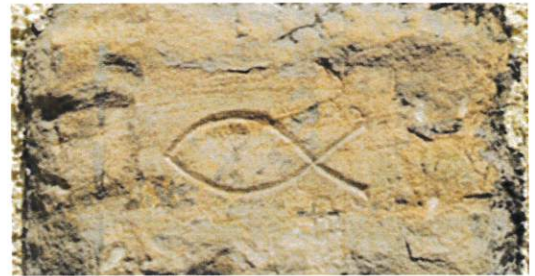
On Sunday, 25 January 1976, the Archbishop of Melbourne, Sir Frank Little, inducted Father Raymond Mitchell as the first Augustinian Parish Priest of South Yarra. He served in this role until 1982, when he was succeeded by Father Paul Dempsey.

Did you know?

The fish, or ICHTHUS, is the symbol used by early Christians to identify themselves in times of persecution. In Greek, ICHTHUS (ΙΧΘΥΣ) is a monogram

for the first five letters of the words "Jesus Christ Son of God, Saviour."

Andrew Balcerzak



PARISH FUNDRAISER

TRIVIA AND GAMES NIGHT

Saturday 15th August

Leonine Hall

St Joseph's Parish Centre

Fitzgerald Street, South Yarra



Join us for an evening of fun, laughter and friendship. Test your brain with trivia and enjoy a game or two of bingo.

Tickets on sale from 1st August

NEW TO THE PARISH?

Welcome! New Parishioner Information forms are available in our churches to complete and return to the parish office or hand to the priest.

THANK YOU to the contributors to this edition:
Fr Brian Buckley OSA, Andrew Balcerzak, Clare Taylor, Priscilla Murphy, Aryana Vega, Stephy Coosnapa & Di Brebner (Editor)

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Mass Times

Tues-Fri: St Joseph's 10am;

St Thomas Aquinas: 12.45pm

Sat: St Joseph's 9am & 6pm

Sun: St Thomas Aquinas: 9am; St Joseph's 10.30am

PARISH WELCOMES, CELEBRATIONS AND FAREWELLS

Through the waters of Baptism, the Parish has welcomed Daisy Jarvis, Neo Stinson, Naila Wamar, Aston Amuso, Henry Johnson, Eliana Tanaka, Felix Harrison.

We rejoice that The Sacrament of Marriage was celebrated by Thomas Cutajar & Elexia Deftereos, Zachary Gibson & Bianca Librandi, James Sissins & Sarah Robinson, Han Wei & Shane Cha.

We farewelled Gaston Gori. **May he rest in eternal peace**