

The Parish *Voice*

THE CATHOLIC PARISH OF BRUNSWICK AND BRUNSWICK EAST
NOVEMBER 2018 – VOLUME 9 NO 3

Listen to what the Spirit is saying ...



On Saturday 10 November, the 'Listening and Dialogue' groups gathered at Our Lady's

On the weekend of 10 and 11 November, more than 40 parishioners gathered at Our Lady's and St Ambrose's to listen to one another's reflections on the question, 'What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?'. There was good conversation among the groups, and many fine suggestions emerged from them. These group suggestions have now been submitted for the Plenary Council's consideration. The timeline is:

2018 – A Year of Listening

2019 – A Year of Discerning

2020 – A Year of Proposing

In October 2020 and May 2021 the proposals will be voted on and proposed legislation will be drawn up. This is a wonderful opportunity for the leaders of the Australian Church to hear and respond to the voice of the people.

Fr Michael



At St Ambrose's on Sunday 11 November, Sr Marjetka and Clare listen intently as Elisa shares her reflections. Each group had a leader who listened and noted the key points of the discussion. The key points were then prioritised and formulated into suggestions for the Plenary Council to consider.

Sr Ann Stevens – Bound for Paris!

Heading from Brunswick to Paris before Christmas is Sr Ann Stevens, a Sister of St Joseph of Cluny, who has recently been elected a general councillor of the Congregation. Having spent her early years in Pascoe Vale, Ann graduated in medicine at Melbourne University, and later did a Master's Degree in Public Health at Monash.

Ann's ministry has taken her to Gambia and Sierra Leone in West Africa, where she spent over twenty years. In Gambia her skills were put into use as medical officer in charge of a government health centre in Serekunda. In 1995 she went to Sierra Leone where she worked at the Cluny Clinic in Makeni. One of her projects was working with people with epilepsy; this involved an education program within the wider community, where there was misunderstanding about the nature of the illness.

This was the time of the civil war, a time of many atrocities. As the schools were closed, Sr Ann and the sisters made the school dormitory available for the rehabilitation of people with war related injuries. Many of these were teenage boys whose hands had been amputated by the rebels. (This



rehabilitation program was partly funded by Melbourne Overseas Mission.)

In 2014 another traumatic event came to Sierra Leone – the Ebola Outbreak. Not only were the victims affected – over 4,000 children were orphaned, all schools were closed, and many school employees were without an income. Sr Ann and her community members were instrumental in obtaining support for these people.

The last three years have seen Sr Ann in Melbourne and Papua New Guinea. It is with vast experience that she now joins the central team of the Congregation.

Sr Josephine O'Kelly

Meeting up with Tiba, Tom and family in Italy

One of the highlights following the recent Parish Pilgrimage to Russia was taking a few days to visit the amazing Byzantine mosaics of Ravenna in Italy. Six of the Parish pilgrimage group took this opportunity, and we journeyed to Italy together. While we were there, parishioners Tiba and Tom and their four children (the baby is asleep in a pram out of the picture) who are living in Italy for at least six months, came to visit us in Ravenna and joined us for lunch in the Piazza del Popolo. It was wonderful to see them again, looking so happy and



well. They are loving their time in Italy and wish they could stay longer. The children are going to school in Brescia and Tom is working as a volunteer doctor amongst refugees in the area. When they return to Australia in 2019 we will ask them to share the story of their enjoyable experience of living in Italy.

Fr Michael

Getting to know the Johnstone Family

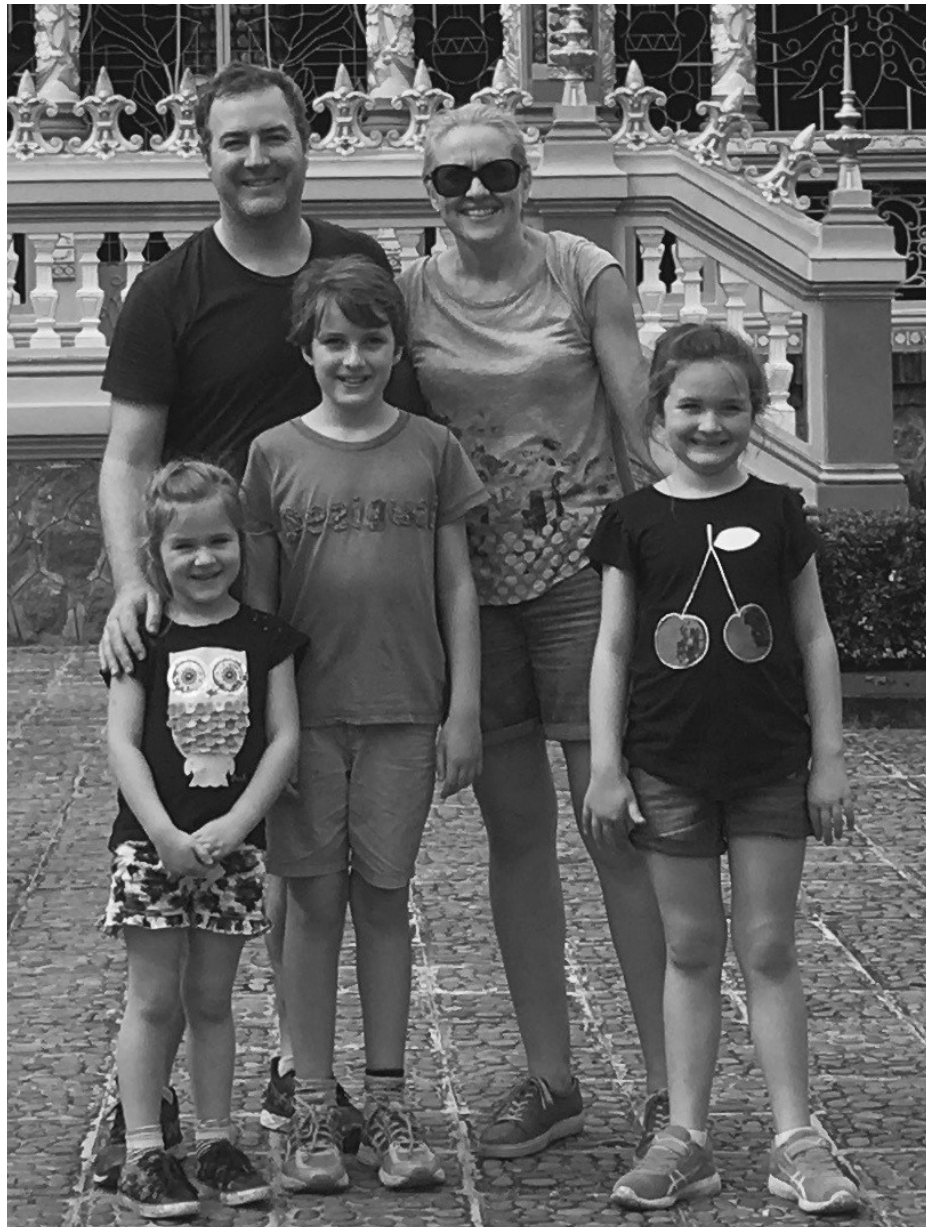
Many Parishioners who attend the 10.30am Mass at St Ambrose's would know the Johnstone family, Clare and Brad and their children William, Tessa and Lucy.

Clare and Brad grew up in small country towns in North-East Victoria and met later in life when they were both living in Brunswick. Their parents still live in Numurkah and Wahgunyah and the family visits them frequently particularly for school holidays, Christmas and Easter.

Clare and Brad have lived in Brunswick for about 20 years and thoroughly enjoy the parish and school community. The children have all been baptised in the parish. William is 11 years old and in Year 5 at Our Lady's School, and Tessa 8 years old and in Year 2 and also at Our Lady's School. Lucy is 5 years old and very excited to be starting in Foundation next year. Clare and Brad's plan was to move back to country Victoria but this will probably never happen as they love living in Brunswick!

Clare works part time as a Senior Lawyer with Victoria Legal Aid and has worked as a criminal and human rights lawyer at Broadmeadows Legal Aid office for the past 13 years. She is also a long-standing board member at Wombat Housing and Support Services, which is an organization for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness in the North West. She is an annual speaker at the *Caritas Australia Women for the World* lunch due to her human rights background.

Brad has worked for the Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority [APRA] for the past 22 years. He is currently a manager supervising financial institutions and promoting financial system stability particularly in the area of superannuation.



*The Johnstone family on their recent visit to Vietnam.
L to R: Lucy, Brad, William, Clare and Tessa*

To relax, Clare plays tennis weekly and Brad is an avid bike rider. William loves to read and write, Tessa loves dancing and swimming and Lucy loves to draw and ride her bike.

The photo above was taken recently outside a temple near the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. The family travelled to Vietnam in September and had a wonderful time learning about this beautiful country, people and food.

We are delighted to have the Johnstone family belonging to our parish!

Mary Connell

Our Italian Weekend

On the weekend of 20 – 21 October, our parish celebrated an *Italian Weekend*, and what a memorable occasion it was! On the Saturday afternoon, Our Lady's Hall was filled with parishioners who were keen to celebrate the uniqueness of the Italian spirit with music, poetry, dancing and, of course, food! Our Italian parishioners were proud to bring delicious, traditional food from home to share with everyone.

Sr Marjetka and her team had spent many months preparing for the weekend and we are grateful for their commitment to making this such a happy and delightful occasion. There are many people to thank, too many to name, but they all worked with Sr Marjetka to make it happen.

There were delightful activities prepared by Elisa for the children: cardboard pizzas, a jigsaw of the Italian regions, colouring sheets, pasta necklaces and numerous other creative ideas. Throughout the afternoon, Cristian patiently and carefully painted many children's faces in the colours of the Italian flag. Angela had spent many hours preparing an impressive display of the contribution of Italian migrants to Australia.

On the Sunday morning we shifted to a more spiritual gear at St Ambrose's with a presentation on the *Sacri Monti* of Piedmont and Lombardy. Elisa introduced us to the beauty and spirituality of the many places of pilgrimage in the Northern Italian mountains. Now we all want to visit Italy!

Tricia Murray





The highlight of the Saturday afternoon was a gnocchi making presentation from Luciana and Pina. Many children crowded around the preparation table to learn how to make gnocchi and then to make their own gnocchi to take home and cook for dinner. Reports are that it was delicious!

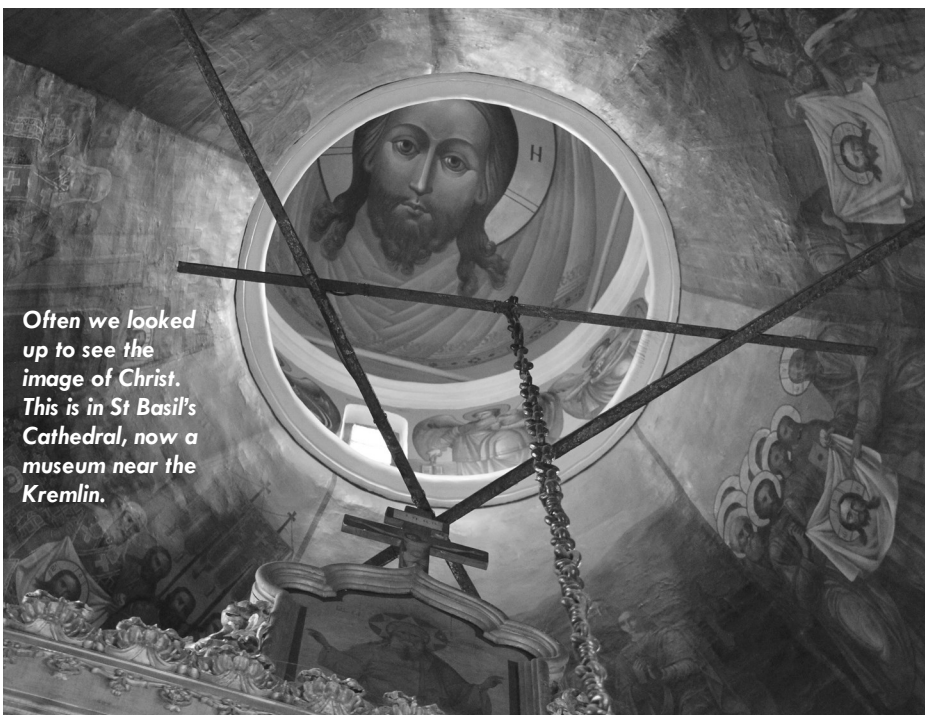


Parish Pilgrimage to Russia

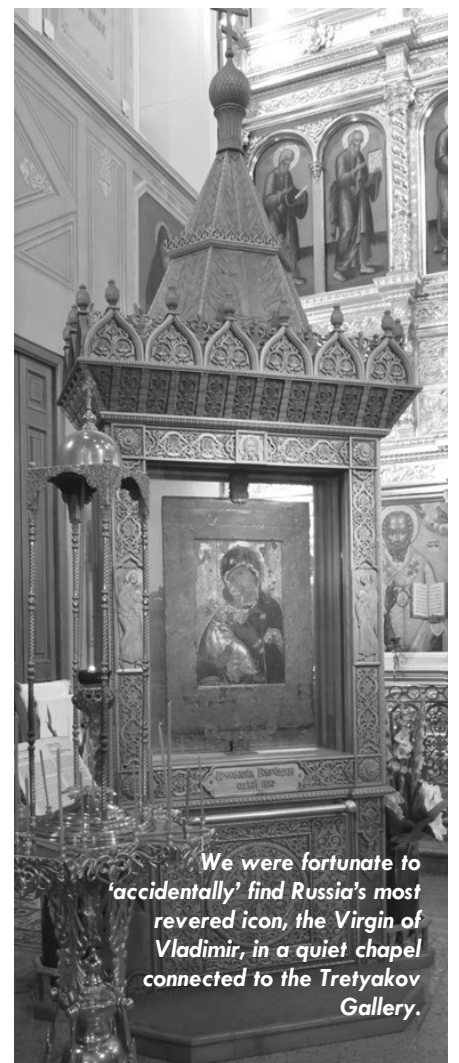


The Trinity Monastery of St Sergius, where Rublev painted the famous icon of the Holy Trinity. This is the largest seminary in the Russian Orthodox Church

During the month of August this year 16 parishioners journeyed to Russia to experience something of the history and tradition of Russian iconography. We were joined by iconographer Ursula Betka who became an integral part of our group. The experience of the pilgrimage was truly awe-inspiring. Knowing some of the history of Russia, particularly the Soviet years, and seeing how the faith of the Russian Church is now so alive and filled with beauty and light has left us with a sense of wonder and deep gratitude that we were given the privilege of being there and witnessing it.



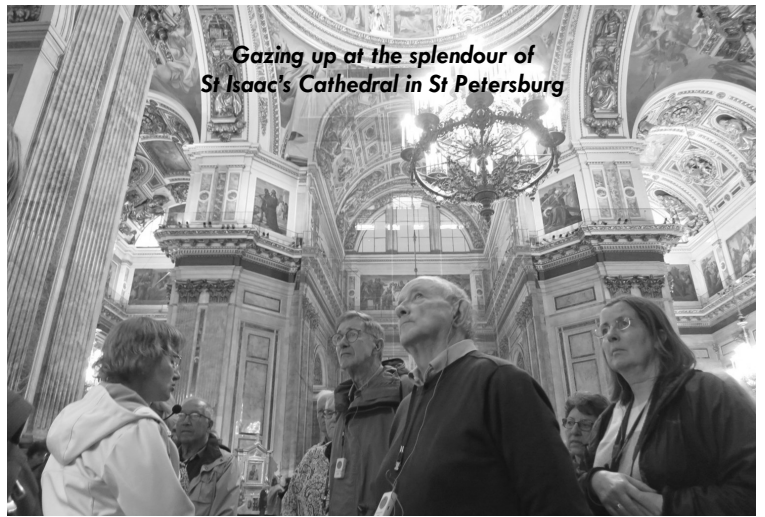
Often we looked up to see the image of Christ. This is in St Basil's Cathedral, now a museum near the Kremlin.



We were fortunate to 'accidentally' find Russia's most revered icon, the Virgin of Vladimir, in a quiet chapel connected to the Tretyakov Gallery.



The prayerful devotion of the Russian people involves the lighting of candles, the veneration of icons, blessing with incense, contemplative chanting ... The atmosphere envelops the whole person in prayer.



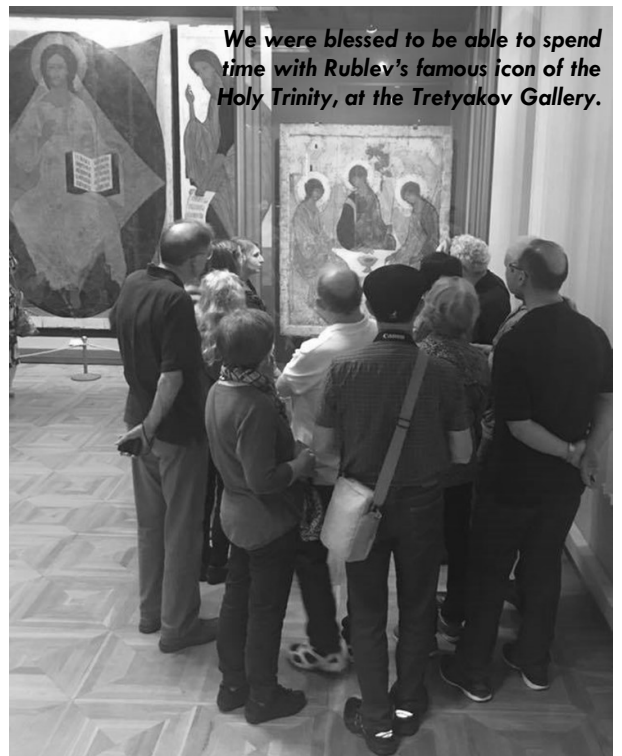
Gazing up at the splendour of St Isaac's Cathedral in St Petersburg



Gathering for Mass in our hotel conference room. Fr Michael seems to have developed a halo!



We visited iconographer Philip Davydov in his studio in St Petersburg



We were blessed to be able to spend time with Rublev's famous icon of the Holy Trinity, at the Tretyakov Gallery.



Riding the impressive underground railway in Moscow!

Throughout our time in Russia we lit many candles before the holy icons and prayed for all parishioners, as well as for our families and friends. We hope that many blessings will flow to the parish as a result of the pilgrimage.

Tricia Murray

Br Michael Herry in Cambodia

Brother Michael Herry has been keeping us up-to-date with his regular blogs from Cambodia. He seems now to be well settled and happy there. Here is a brief extract from his most recent blog:

'Every Friday afternoon, at the end of the teaching week we have a school assembly, where some items are presented by a particular class on a roster system and the national flag is ceremonially lowered as the Cambodian anthem is sung. It's a simple and moving ceremony, the only blemish being, quite frankly, the quality of the singing. Well, today I have a small group of singers who have prepared well and who will lead today's rendition in a suitable key. It's interesting that the version of the anthem sung here at Lavalla has some changes to the 'official version' which I've written out from YouTube.'

'We have two Italian women with us at present. They're from a privately funded Italian charity called 'Mission Bambini' which offers us financial assistance on an annual basis. Both women have



been very active, and came with lots of entertaining educational ideas which require a minimum of conversation. This morning I saw them mixing up pizza dough in preparation for an after-school snack for the kids. On Wednesday evening they accompanied us to our regular evening Mass and meal in Phnom Penh and spoke very movingly in sometimes broken English about the impact of being here with the children and what it has meant for them.

Last night I, along with Br Brian and our two Italian visitors from *Mission Bambini*, attended the Catholic expat mass in Phnom Penh. It was a beautiful Mass, the whole of which seemed to me, like a seamless prayer. ... Somehow you can tell when someone is speaking from a place of heart-felt and transparent integrity, as did Fr Charlie last night. Charlie's main homily point being that of the basic decency of ordinary people, as we all go about our lives and if only we could see ourselves and each other as our God sees us!

Br Michael Herry

This Year's Christmas Stamps

This year's religious Christmas stamps have a special significance for us. They were painted by iconographer Ursula Betka who joined our parish group on the Icon pilgrimage to Russia in August. The Australia Post website states that, 'The traditional Christmas stamps for 2018 are based on paintings by Ursula Betka, which were created using age-old medieval techniques. ... The Madonna and Child and the Musical Angels are depicted within a mystical landscape. Heaven is brought to earth and the created world is transfigured by the divine presence, uplifting the soul.'

The beautiful images on the stamps will be seen all around Australia, and the world, bringing the truth of the Christmas message to many thousands of people!

Tricia Murray



Thanks to all who have contributed to this issue:

Mary Connell, Sr Josephine O'Kelly, Fr Michael Casey, Tricia Murray, Clare Johnstone, Paul Mercieca (photographer)