

St Michael's Meadowbank Catholic Parish

*2018 Parish Stewardship
of God's Gifts Report*

St Michael's Meadowbank Parish Financial Report
(Financial Year ending 30 June 2018,
with preliminary figures to 31 December 2018).
Report Published March 2019

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St Michael's Parish

Plenary 2020 Statement

‘Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.’ - 2 Corinthians 9:7-8

www.stmichaelsmeadowbank.org.au

My Dear Parishioners,

St Michael's Meadowbank is a blessed Catholic community. This has been evident in so many ways in the last 12 months through the generosity, faithfulness and openness of so many parishioners.

Parishioners contribute to the mission of Jesus Christ in our parish on a weekly basis through volunteering their talents, committing their time to service and prayer, and through generously sharing their resources through our weekly collections.

2018 was the year the parish celebrated the 70th anniversary of the appointment of the first resident parish priest of Saint Michael's Meadowbank, Fr Keith Bush. We gathered for a week of celebrations that included a dinner dance, a retreat, a novena, a Parish Fun Day celebration, a day of prayer of forgiveness, and a School celebration of the Parish Feast Day.

Please consider volunteering to help make this parish what God is calling us to at this moment in history. Recently in February 2019, 38 parishioners participated in a listening and dialogue forum as part of the Catholic Church's National Plenary 2020. In the following pages of this document is a summary of the reflections of the parishioners and the submission that was made to Plenary 2020 on behalf of the parishioners. Please read the suggestions of the parishioners and consider helping to implement some of these suggestions in the parish in the not too distant future. A Catholic parish flourishes when the priests and laity work together in the mission of Christ for the glory of God.

2018 was a very solid year for the parish. Mass attendance has steadily grown and with stronger and more regular numbers at weekend Masses, the collections have also risen. There is now strong evidence that St. Michael's Meadowbank is a viable one priest parish community.

The first collection, which helps pay for the costs of priests and bishops across Sydney, increased in the parish in 2018 by 13%, which was a very good performance. By comparison, across the entire Archdiocese, first collection contributions increased by 4%.

The second collection and envelopes/direct contributions have increased by 11% compared with 2017, and this increased giving has helped the Parish meet our regular recurring expenditure and to begin to plan for increased missionary activity for the future. A parish budget, a few restructuring of suppliers, and a slight increase in contributions for catechist materials, has seen parish expenditure decrease by 5%.



The Parish has a \$1.4 million term deposit, which is providing regular income for the parish, and allows the parish to dream about and consider large future ministry opportunities.

As fewer and fewer Australians now carry large amounts of cash, please consider establishing a recurring direct transfer to the parish for the first and second collections. Details are in the bulletin each week and are also available in this document. Please let the parish office know if you implement this, so that a giver number can be allocated to you.

Each and every Catholic is called to do our very best to live the life and the mission of Jesus Christ within our local community context. Please consider praying about ways each of us can engage and re-engage families and young people in the mission of Jesus Christ and the practice of faith within the Church. Evangelisation and long-term growth in the life of the Church will only be achieved if every parishioner takes seriously the call to discipleship and the call to go into the world and to make disciples of all nations.

Thank you for all your support and contributions in 2018. I look forward to serving with you as we journey on the path towards becoming members of God's eternal kingdom.

Blessings to you and to your families and loved ones.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James McCarthy".

Fr James McCarthy
Parish Administrator
1 March, 2019

Finance at St Michael's Meadowbank

with Stephen Topple (Chairman - Parish Finance Committee)

St Michael's at Meadowbank is a wonderful thriving Catholic community that celebrated its 70th anniversary as a parish last year. Look around to see the physical achievements of the parish: our church, the school, our car park. All this is because of the commitment and contributions of St Michael's parishioners. While we are no longer financially responsible for the school, the remainder of the parish must be maintained spiritually and materially.



Many contribute and provide service, such as those who minister as catechists or in the St Vincent de Paul conference. The physical aspects of the church also require attention:

mowing lawns, cleaning the church and attending to the altar and sanctuary. Other things must be paid for such as providing for our priest's stipend, accommodation and meals, electricity and insurance for the church, salaries for office staff, altar bread, liturgical items, repairs to buildings or renovations such as the Archdiocese's new requirements for the design of confessionals. Money and its management are necessary.

Like our families or a business, we must manage our parish financial resources by budgeting income and making sure we can pay our way. Not only do we need a priest to minister to us, the parish must also be financially sound, and finances must be managed wisely and carefully.

Belonging to the Finance Committee is about service, being involved and helping. We all must be involved. Our faith requires doing something more than Mass on Sunday. The way I chose for service was a role in the Finance Committee. I have an ability and an interest in this area as I am an accountant. My wife and I came to the parish in 1980 when Father Bush was still in the parish. Father Alt arrived soon after to become the Administrator and Parish Priest. Father Alt asked me to join the Finance Committee.

Later I came to chair the Finance Committee and I have been in this role ever since.

My children and a grandson went to school at St Michael's. My wife played the organ at Sunday 10am Mass and helped with the Children's Liturgy for many years. She is now an occasional organist at the 8am Mass on Sunday. Sunday 8am is my usual Mass and once a month I acolyte at this Mass. During the week I acolyte at the Thursday morning Mass and conduct a Liturgy of the Word on Monday's once a month.

What is a Parish Finance Committee?

The Parish Finance Committee, a committee required by Church law, is a consultative body of the Parish, presided over by the Parish Priest and consists of diverse members of the Parish community, who share and offer advice and consultation to the Parish Priest. The Finance Committee seeks to lessen the burden of the Parish Priest in his role of administering parish finances, in maintaining parish properties, in planning for future capital works, in raising necessary finances and in establishing a framework for greater shared responsibility within parish life.

Regular Weekly Giving

The chart below may assist you, along with your prayerful consideration, as to the amount of your weekly Sunday offering:

INCOME VS PROPORTIONAL GIVING

A Total Weekly Gift to the Church should take into account the 1st, 2nd and special collections that occur throughout the year.

In Catholic Parishes, we have 3 main sources of regular giving.

- 1. First Collection at Mass** - Assists with the stipend of the priest (\$18,500 p.a.) and food expenses for the priest. Also assists with the expenses of the Archbishop and priest expenses at other parishes and chaplaincies that are unable to raise enough funds.

The Parish has a break-even budget to raise \$1250 per week in 2019 for the first collection.

- 2. Second Collection at Mass and Parish Planned Giving** (Envelopes/Direct Debit/Credit Card giving) - Assists in the Expenses of the Parish: staff, utilities, church and altar, repairs and maintenance of church, presbytery and site, insurance, pastoral and sacramental programs. Contributions receive a 25% Tax deduction.

The Parish has a break-even budget to raise \$1900 per week in 2019 on the second collection.

- 3. Occasional Special Collections** - for the Archdiocesan Charitable Works Fund Appeal and other Catholic charitable activities. Contributions receive a 100% tax deduction.

Annual Combined Household Income	1%	5%	10%
\$10,000	\$2	\$10	\$19
\$15,000	\$3	\$14	\$29
\$20,000	\$4	\$19	\$38
\$25,000	\$5	\$24	\$48
\$30,000	\$6	\$29	\$58
\$35,000	\$7	\$34	\$67
\$40,000	\$8	\$38	\$77
\$50,000	\$10	\$48	\$96
\$60,000	\$12	\$58	\$115
\$70,000	\$13	\$67	\$135
\$80,000	\$15	\$77	\$154
\$90,000	\$17	\$87	\$173
\$100,000	\$19	\$96	\$192
\$120,000	\$23	\$115	\$231
\$150,000	\$29	\$144	\$288

Please note: Although St Michael's Meadowbank Primary School is connected to the St Michael's Meadowbank Parish, there is no income or reimbursement that the Parish receives from the School to assist in providing the liturgical, pastoral and facility support that the Parish provides to the School and the families who attend the School. Furthermore, Parish administration and priestly staff are funded entirely from parishioner contributions at Sunday Mass and not from School Fees or any levy charged by the School.

Direct Transfer Giving

Please consider using a direct recurring transfer for regular Sunday offerings. It is a safe, secure process that each person can easily setup via their own online banking, to give to the parish on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis.

The Parish First Collection account details are as follows:

BSB: 062 784; Account Number: 04292002; Account Name: St Michael's Pastoral Revenue Account

The Parish Second Collection account details are as follows:

BSB: 062 784; Account Number: 04295003; Account Name: St Michael's Church Clearing Account.

Those who use Direct Transfer or Credit Card can still choose to receive envelopes. Please let the parish office know that you intend to use credit card or transfer giving so that you can be given a giver number and your giving can be linked to your name for tax deduction purposes.

Please note: The Parish does not encourage large credit card giving, although the parish has a facility to help process donations. Credit card debt can be a terrible burden on a family.

Caring for Children and Vulnerable People

The Parish is committed to the Christ-like care of all children, young persons and vulnerable people. By following in the example of Jesus Christ and his words to "Let the little children come!", the Parish is doing all it can to build a community and a Church that safeguards the voice, freedom and life of children, young persons and vulnerable people.

The emotional, physical and spiritual safety, well-being and dignity of children is an integral part of the teachings and values of the Catholic Church. The Parish and the Archdiocese of Sydney are wholly committed to ensuring the safety, well-being and dignity of all children, and acknowledges its important legal, moral and spiritual responsibility to create a safe and nurturing environment for those children.

In fulfilling this responsibility, the Archdiocese of Sydney has developed a variety of protocols and procedures that work together to protect children from harm and respond swiftly and appropriately in the rare but regrettable circumstances in which children are harmed or at risk of being harmed. These protocols and procedures seek not only to ensure children's safety, well-being and dignity within the Archdiocese's parishes and agencies, but also outside the Church environment, in the event that a member of the Archdiocese learns of a matter of concern.

In addition, these protocols and procedures embody the inherent values of the Catholic Church, providing education and training to persons who engage with children within the Archdiocese and also representing and sharing our teachings and philosophy with the broader community.

The Policies and procedures are available on the parish website or the Parish Office.

The *Policy on the care, well-being and protection of children and young persons* contains a broad overview of the Parish and Archdiocese's child protection expectations and practices, and it should be read in conjunction with the Archdiocese's comprehensive suite of protocols and procedures, which are referenced throughout. The policy has been developed with the best interests of the child as the paramount consideration. A child is any person under the age of 16 years and a young person means a person who is aged 16 years or above but is under the age of 18 years.

Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office

Director: Karen Larkman

Ph: 02 9390 5812

karen.larkman@sydneycatholic.org

The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office of the Archdiocese of Sydney has a role to raise awareness regarding our collective responsibility to protect the safety, well-being and dignity of children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Archdiocese of Sydney and to respond swiftly and compassionately in circumstances in which children are harmed or at risk of being harmed.

The focus of the Safeguarding Office is the prevention of abuse and harm to children, young people and the vulnerable within our Archdiocese. To this end, the Safeguarding Office has been developing and delivering training programmes on a range of Safeguarding protocols and procedures that work together to protect children from harm. These protocols and procedures embody the inherent values of the Catholic Church.

If you or a person close to you has been abused by someone working or ministering within the Archdiocese of Sydney, we invite you to contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office. We will listen to you respectfully, offer support and discuss the options you have available to you. Please contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office on ph 02 9390 5812.

Parish Financial Reports

Figures of June 30, 2018 Year End Financial Report, 6 month preliminary figures (July-December 2018) and 6 Month Budget for 2019 year with comparative Statement of Income/Expenditure for 2014-2018.

Note:

The budget for 6 months of 2019 was prepared after taking into consideration the targets and goals for the previous 5 years and as per the mission and objectives of Saint Michael's Parish Finance Committee. The total receipts are matched for funding on the various religious, liturgical and pastorals ministries after allocating required funds for parish administration and maintenance of the parish building and grounds as well as presbytery & living expenses and provision for the payment of interest and the amount to be paid with respect to the Charitable Works Fund assessment shortfall.

Commentary:

Parish giving increased in 2018 by 11%, with operating expenditure declining by 5%. Net Surplus for the Parish increased by 471% in 2018, with an improved position of \$29,316. 2019 Net Surplus is currently tracking to deliver a further 33% increase to the net surplus, with an expected surplus of \$47,000.

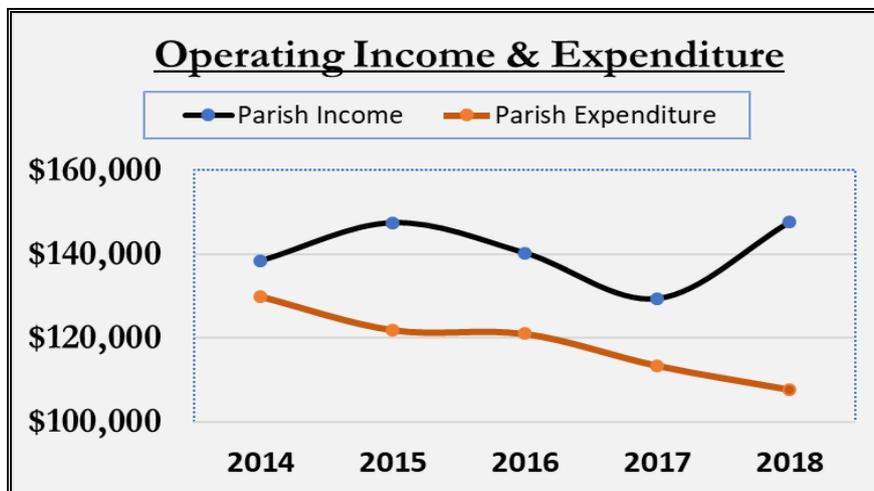
Parish Income

Parish Income	2019 Budget Jan-Jun	2018 July- Dec	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Envelope/Loose Collection	35,727	51,750	87,674	79,106	91,450	84,817	77,794
Candles (Net)	1,578	1,922	1,722	3,799	1,520	-	-
Donations/ Bequests Received	433	2,567	7,477	2,940	4,155	379	955
Bank Interest and Distributions *1	32,508	302	32,851	32,486	32,075	51,270	54,390
Other Operating Receipts *2	19,200	20,800	17,900	11,000	11,000	11,000	5,250
Total operating receipts	89,446	77,341	147,624	129,331	140,200	147,466	138,389

*1 Catholic Church Insurances and the Catholic Development Fund Sydney give an annual distribution to Parishes.

*2 The Parish receives income from leasing the Parish Hall for After School Care.

The Hall rental arrangements were renegotiated in November 2017 so that the Parish will receive a larger percentage of income, reflecting the parish contribution to the construction of the Bush Hall.



Parish Expenditure

<u>Parish Expenditure</u>	2019 Budget Jan-Jun	2018 July- Dec	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Altar Bread/Wine/Candles & Liturgy *3	3,025	1,140	2,907	3,863	3,931	5,551	3,108
Electricity, Gas, Water, Garbage	1,770	2,346	5,155	4,031	3,739	3,138	2,716
Insurance	3,687	12,922	17,051	16,546	16,104	15,114	15,968
Charitable Works Fund Shortfall	219	(219)	(1,782)	1,556	1,222	(464)	6,958
Travelling/Car Expenses	7,286	6,309	15,641	10,858	13,621	12,933	18,706
Office/Printing Expenses *4	3,081	1,574	4,264	4,630	4,430	4,843	4,494
Property Repairs & Maintenance	5,188	1,295	5,783	6,404	5,658	7,456	6,438
Staff Salaries/Superannuation *5	28,409	25,640	51,901	56,559	58,077	56,252	46,147
Pastoral Expenses *6	(62)	(939)	(3,862)	(1,899)	376	1,477	869
Donations Given	199	-	-	10	515	250	650
Other Operating Expenses	6,307	6,482	10,492	10,755	13,310	15,353	23,920
Total operating expenditure	59,109	56,550	107,550	113,313	120,983	121,903	129,974
Non-operating expenditure *7	4,000	-	4,540	9,800	300,184	19,411	11,113
NET Surplus (Deficit)	26,338	20,791	35,534	6,218	(280,967)	6,152	(2,698)

EXPLANATORY Notes:

*3 Royalties/Copyright licences for music & audio/visual, vestments and altar utensils, church decorations, candles, Mass wine, altar breads, sacristy supplies and liturgical supplies.

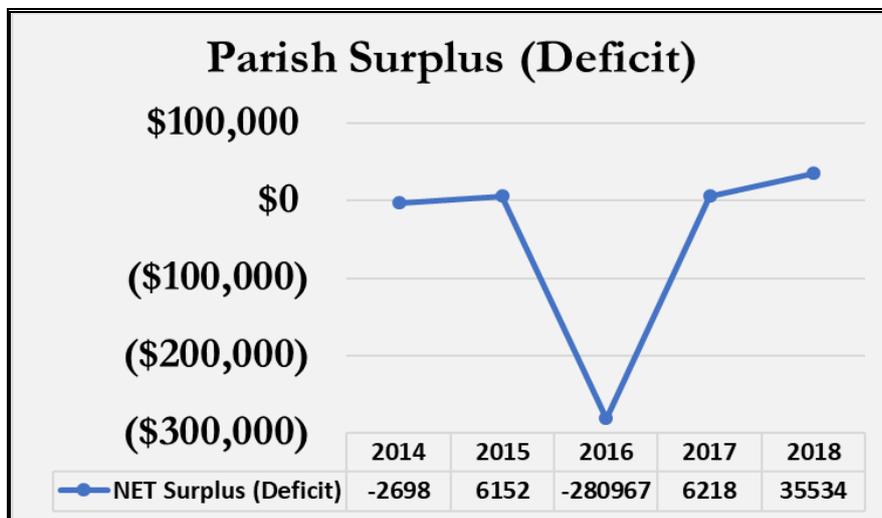
*4 Office supplies, printing and stationery, photocopy costs, bulletin costs, maintenance of office equipment, postage, costs of communications via telephone, internet and banking charges.

*5 Includes the payroll costs of two part-time lay parish staff and the superannuation and motor vehicle costs for the clergy. Clergy Stipend (\$18,500 p.a.) is paid from the Pastoral Revenue (First Collection) account.

*6 The Parish recovers some of the costs associated with Lenten Programs, Sacramental Programs and Catechist Programs in State Schools.

*7 The building of the parish carpark, and other major capital works are listed under non-operating expenditure.

Commentary: Net Surplus, which includes the total income of the Parish and all the bills and expenses to run the Parish, reached \$35,534, for the 2018 financial year. Taking into account CPI inflation of 2% on net assets in 2017, the actual Net Surplus for 2018 was \$6,563. Please note the Parish invested a significant amount of money in the Parish carpark in 2016 (Non-Operating Expenditure), and thus a deficit of \$280,967 occurred in 2016.



Parish Giving stays with the Parish

In recent years, the Catholic Church in Australia has attracted considerable media attention in relation to the finances of the Catholic Church. The Church has signed on to participate in the National Redress Scheme for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney has already earmarked income from certain investments for this purpose.

Any donations or bequests that are given for parish purposes will be used for parish purposes.

Various figures have been suggested in the media regarding the supposed assets of the Catholic Church in Sydney and beyond. Some of these figures are inflated and deceiving. For instance, if St Mary's Cathedral is valued as a potential site for a Westfield or a high-rise apartment development, it may appear to be of enormous value; however, its value is as a spiritual and artistic patrimony of the Church and our nation. Rather than being an income earning 'asset,' the Cathedral and most historic churches cost a great deal to maintain.

The Catholic Church is much more than our buildings – we are principally our people and the works of the Church. The Catholic Church is the nation's largest non-government provider of pastoral care, primary and secondary schooling, tertiary education, healthcare, marriage preparation and counselling, social welfare services especially to the poor, aged care and palliative care. In some of these areas, the Catholic Church makes an even bigger contribution than any government in Australia. If the Church wasn't doing our mission, who would?

Some examples of the vital works of the Catholic Church are:

- The Catholic Church is the largest non-government provider of health care services in Australia, including aged and community services.
- St Vincent's Health Australia, for example, is the nation's largest not-for-profit Catholic health and aged care provider. It is a clinical, research and education leader working in private hospitals, public hospitals and aged care services – for all people.
- The Catholic Church provides social and welfare services to more than a million Australians a year including more than 500 programs in the areas of disability, children and youth services, counselling, employment, parental assistance, refugees and assistance to the homeless.
- In education the current recurrent savings to NSW and Commonwealth Governments of not having to educate Catholic Systemic school students in state schools exceeds \$483 million per annum.
- The Catholic Church has also built much of our country's social infrastructure in these and other areas. It continues to build and sustain local communities of faith and service, and to support families and individuals where there is often little other support. It cares for the most disadvantaged and is a voice for the voiceless. It provides most of these things for our whole society, Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

But the Church can only do these good things for our community because generation after generation of Catholics have built up the infrastructure of churches, schools, convents, Vinnies centres and the rest that people call 'Church assets'. Many 'Church assets' are in fact held on trust for specific purposes nominated by the government or benefactors who provided them (e.g. school grants, money earmarked for charitable works). Others are held to back employee entitlements, debts etc. Others again (like our cathedral) are artistic patrimony of the Church, city and nation. In all these cases the Church is not free to just dispose of the assets for any purpose and it is misleading to lump all these things together as "the wealth of the Church".

Legacy and Bequest Giving

What we do with the gifts we have been given expresses what we believe. A legacy or a bequest is a gift left for the benefit of future generations. As good stewards, a Legacy program ensures that future needs of our Church and ministries are met. Our Christian faith, even in death, calls us to witness the new life that God gives in Christ through his death and resurrection.

A gift to the Parish Legacy Program may take many forms such as:

- Lump sum bequests or percentage of your estate as stated in your Will
- Beneficiary of Life Insurance, Superannuation or Tax Free Savings Account
- Gifts of cash or publicly traded shares during your lifetime
- Bequest of a specific asset such as real estate, jewellery or shares in your will.

Gifts may be made by individuals, families, organizations and/or corporations. These gifts may be directed to the general revenues of the Parish or to any specific ministry within the Parish such as:

- Debt reduction • Youth and Education • Music • Liturgy
- Adult Faith Formation • Evangelization • Outreach

By making a bequest to the Church, you can also elect to contribute to a specific important work of the Church, for example the Charitable Works Fund, The Priests Retirement Foundation, The Clerical Medical Fund of the Archdiocese of Sydney or the Clergy Remuneration System of the Archdiocese of Sydney.

For your final wishes to be honoured, you must have a valid Will. For this reason, it is very important that you arrange to have a valid Will drawn up by a solicitor. To learn more or discuss your Legacy Giving please contact the parish office.

Cardinal Gilroy Society

The Cardinal Gilroy Society has been established to honour the generosity of those individuals who have pledged a bequest to any of the good works of the Sydney Archdiocese. The Society is a way that we can thank you now for your foresight and very special contribution.

The Society is named after Cardinal Norman Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney from 1940 to 1971. Cardinal Gilroy made a significant contribution to Australian society and to the Catholic community. He was a veteran of Gallipoli, was ordained a priest in Rome, became the first Australian-born Cardinal and the first Cardinal since the reformation to receive a knighthood. In 1970 he was named Australian of the Year.

Members of *The Cardinal Gilroy Society* receive invitations to special events, a unique pin and a certificate. There is no cost or obligation for membership. If you are interested in joining, please contact the Bequest Manager of the Archdiocese of Sydney on 1800 753 959 or email bequests@sydneycatholic.org

To date, Saint Michael's Parish has received generous Legacy Gifts in the last 10 years from our former now deceased parishioners.

Thank you to the following:

2006 - \$241,943 – 50% of the Estate of Annie Irene Starkey

2017 - \$5080 – Estate of Sespen Shidrawi

2018 – No Bequest this year.



Mortgage and Debt Reduction

The current balance of our parish debt is \$0. Due to the incredible generosity of many generations of parishioners, the Parish is currently not in any debt. The Parish has very limited ability to generate additional income for future major works, and the small amount of annual income (approximately \$27,000) generated from the parish savings (\$1.4 million) means the Parish would find it difficult to undertake any new major developments without engaging loans. New pastoral initiatives or developments will require additional funding and will involve future loans for the parish.

In the early days of the Parish and until very recently (January 2017) the Parish has been responsible for a variety of loans, including loans for the building of the Church, the Bush Parish Hall, the building of the parish carpark, for the building and refurbishment of St Michael's Meadowbank Primary School and so on. From 1 January 2017, the loan balance of \$177,441 still owing for the Bush Parish Hall was transferred to St Michael's Primary School as part of a restructure of the Parish Building Levies and the Parish School Building Funds.

Did You Know?

- Our parish electricity and utilities bills in 2018 for the church, presbytery and office was \$8,121.
- Over **130 volunteers** are serving in ministry and **130 tax receipts** were issued for 2018 donations.
- **207 guests** attended the Parish 70th Anniversary Dinner Dance celebration on 28 September, 2018.
- **87 guests** attended the Parish Volunteer Thank you luncheon in December 2018.
- **31 baptisms** occurred at St Michael's in 2018, and **158 children** made First Reconciliation, First Communion or Confirmation in 2018.
- There were **7 funerals** and **2 weddings** at St Michael's in 2018.
- **356 children** with 82% Catholics attended St Michael's Meadowbank Primary School in 2017.
- Our current Catechists have a combined **130 years of service**.
- **240 children receive weekly classes** in Catholic Scripture at the 3 Public Schools in the Parish (Meadowbank Public, West Ryde Public, Ermington Public).
- It costs approx. **\$700/year to supply donation envelopes** to parishioners.
- In a typical month we use approximately **3,500 hosts** at a cost of \$150 each month.
- During a typical month, **22 sick and homebound parishioners** are visited and brought Holy Communion on a weekly basis.

Workplace Giving and Donation Matching

More and more Australian companies are undertaking employee matched giving programs. Close to 70% of companies in Australia now support employee fundraising efforts and/or workplace giving by matching the contribution.

What is workplace giving?

Workplace Giving is a joint relationship between employers, employees and registered charities. Individuals contribute a small portion of their pre-tax salary to a charity that offers a tax deduction. The individual will then receive the tax benefit straight away rather than waiting until the end of the financial year to submit a tax return. For example, if you donate \$20, it will only cost you \$12.60 (if you are on a high income) but the charity will receive the full \$20. In most cases, employers will also match staff donations dollar for dollar, so the value of your donation will double to \$40 direct to the charity of your choice.

If you don't know if your employer will match your donations, then ask your Human Resources Department if your company has a matched giving program. If you work for a medium or large-sized company, then more than likely they will match your donations to charities, to special collections and to the Parish.

25% of regular Parish donations are eligible for tax deductions and 100% of Charitable Works Fund donations receive tax deductions. You and your employer could consider supporting the Charitable Works Fund or the Parish through matched giving.



Special Collections



2014-2018

CONTRIBUTIONS TO OTHER COLLECTIONS	2015	2016	2017	2018
Pastoral Revenue (Weekly 1st Collection – to Support Clergy)	58,708	58,967	56,786	64,063
Charitable Works Fund (CWF – Archdiocese of Sydney)	16,222	11,443	11,494	12,187
Caritas Project Compassion Lenten Appeal	8,537	6,600	8,455	7,042
Priests Retirement Foundation	1,559	3,202	2,039	2,371
Catholic Mission	1,623	3,565	2,105	2,327
Holy Father's Annual Appeal	1,013	870	478	540
Holy Places - Good Friday	2,100	1,827	1,789	1,977
Other Appeals	539	886	644	2,689
St Vincent De Paul Society	12,275	13,860	12,849	11,382
TOTAL COLLECTED FOR NON PARISH RELATED CAUSES	27,646	30,810	28,359	28,328
TOTAL COLLECTED FOR CWF and 1st Collection	74,930	70,410	68,280	76,250
TOTAL COLLECTED FOR THE PARISH	84,817	92,970	82,905	89,326
GRAND TOTAL COLLECTED IN THE PARISH Per Annum	187,393	194,190	179,544	193,904

Percentage of Parish Giving to Non Parish Causes	15%	16%	16%	15%
Percentage of 1st Collection/CWF Giving	31%	30%	32%	39%
Percentage of Parish Giving for Parish	45%	48%	46%	46%



CHARITABLE WORKS FUND

Archdiocesan Charitable Works Fund Appeal

Every year the Archdiocese of Sydney assesses parishes and determines an annual quota that each parish needs to raise for the Charitable Works Fund. The Charitable Works Fund (CWF) supports CatholicCare; CCD (ministry expenses for catechists in state schools); Ephpheta Centre for the Hearing Impaired; Aboriginal Catholic Ministry; and Seminaries, University and Hospital Chaplaincies. The CWF assists in furthering our mission of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to all corners of Sydney.

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” Luke 6:38

Plenary 2020 Statement of Parishioners of St Michael's Meadowbank

Plenary 2020 Parish Ambassadors: Susan Marendy, Suzy Curro

Plenary Council 2020 is a formal meeting of the Catholic Church in Australia (with the approval of Pope Francis) to occur in 2020 and 2021. This Council will reflect on the current situation of the Church and attempt to make decisions about actions and priorities for the future of the Church in Australia. Every Australian parish and every Australian has been invited to be involved in the consultation and listening phase.

30 Parishioners (60 years +) and 8 (30-50 years old) participated in the Plenary 2020 reflection process held at St Michael's Parish Meadowbank on 22 and 23 February, 2019.

The responses of parishioners to the question "**What is God asking of us in Australia at this time?**" can be summarised in 4 areas:

1. Evangelisation and Outreach
2. Formation, Education and Family Enrichment
3. Administration, Governance and sharing of resources between dioceses and across Australia and throughout the Region of Oceania and Asia
4. Prayer and Spirituality

Summary derived from Question and personal sharing of stories and experiences:

1. Evangelisation and Outreach

A reinvigorated and lively personal relationship with Jesus Christ has to be the focus for the Church. Every person (lay or ordained, child, adult or retired) should feel welcomed and acknowledged as part of a Catholic community that is following in the ways and the life of Jesus Christ. The responsibility for the mission of the Church is shared by the whole faith community, and all Catholics need to be given the support and encouragement to undertake the mission of evangelisation, outreach and social justice as Catholics today.

Gatherings of Catholic faithful are a great strength for the Catholic community. Youth gatherings are important, and it was suggested that regional gatherings should occur from time to time in different parts of Australia, and should include participants from other countries in the Oceania and Asian regions. Gatherings that include all Catholics should also occur, and these should be designed to provide something for everyone.

It was shared that all Catholics need to **be more apostolic and intentional about evangelising**, including focussing on the Holy Spirit and forming visible groups of Catholic followers of Jesus Christ, eg. charismatic groups, Legion of Mary, Catholic Womens League, St Vincent De Paul Society and other Catholic Outreach organisations.

Australia is a very happy country with great social security/welfare, but Australians are moving away from God and from the Judaeo-Christian spiritual tradition. The Church at all levels needs to modernise to reach families while remaining faithful to the Judaeo-Christian moral tradition. Non-institutionalised family centres, which provide marriage counselling and programs from everyday perspectives need to be rolled-out across dioceses and deaneries. Families and individuals need help in how to forgive, how to be kind and how to be Catholics today in their local community.

Catholics are experts at forming exclusive groups, however these groups have caused and are causing separation and even discrimination at times. Catholics need to become visible agents of God's mercy, and Catholic leaders and the Catholic community need to be at the places where people are suffering and in great need. However, the separation of Catholic school communities from Catholic parish communities was identified as an area of special concern. It was thought that Catholic schools have become a service to the wider community and less about a community of the followers of Jesus Christ. The pressure on young parents, especially mothers, has changed from previous generations, with more women working full-time and thus there is less time available to be an active part of the community. Furthermore, outreach and inclusion of people with disabilities, people with same sex attraction, and young couples needs to be a focus for the mission of the Church.

The message of the person of Jesus Christ is a positive message, and the message and direction of the Church should be positive and hopeful. The development of positive and contemporary Catholic evangelists/speakers

should occur in Australia, while also coordinating international speaker tours on a diocesan and national level. Every Catholic community should be open to asking and accepting help with the mission of the Church. Social justice and outreach should be the ownership and responsibility of all Catholics, and the clericalization and professionalisation of the Church has a tendency to make most Catholics into consumers of Church spirituality as opposed to active participants in the mission.

2. Formation, Education and Family Enrichment

Formation for children and Ongoing Formation for adults needs strong consideration. Faith formation classes for parents and young adults should be a typical offering in every parish. Catholics of all ages need to be encouraged to continue to develop their faith and to be prepared to explain and publicly witness to their faith in Jesus Christ. Programs should be developed that help to enrich the experience of receiving each sacrament, and offered 2 or 3 years after receiving the sacrament. Marriage Encounter should be widely encouraged, and the teaching of Theology of the Body needs to be integrated into school curriculum and into preaching within parishes.

Youth and child formation should be encouraged through Parish Sunday School programs, especially in States where Catechesis in State Schools has ceased. Catholic school communities need to be formally connected with the parish and there needs to be national agreements about Religious Education curriculum and outcomes.

3. Administration, Governance and sharing of resources between dioceses and across Australia and throughout the Region of Oceania and Asia

Church Administration and Governance were discussed and it was proposed that there needs to be modifications to reflect the current theology of the Church and current community expectations. Leadership of the Church needs to be outward looking, identifying ways the Church can contribute positively to society on a political, cultural and environmental level.

The distinction between Clergy and Laity can create a class system or an “Us v Them” system. It was questioned why clergy need to be given a special status in administration. All Catholics need to know they are called and have a responsibility for the mission of the Church, and the laity need to know that they are the Church with the ordained, and that bishops and priests do not always or necessarily speak for the Church. Many Catholics unfortunately do not volunteer as often as many might wish to. In the past, there were never as many competing interests as there are today. The Church often comes last for many people who are working full-time, and something needs to be done so that Catholics do not expect the Church to do things for them, but rather what each person can do for Christ in the Church. For some people the Church has become a social group, while for others it is a place to experience religion.

Some participants expressed concern about shortage of priests, parish mergers and possible “priest-less” parishes. Others identified the importance of vocations promotion, an increased role for permanent married deacons and the role of religious women and lay women and men within decision making roles in the Church.

Exchanges/Sharing of Resources of priests and lay faithful between neighbouring parishes between city and country parishes, and between Australian and Oceania parishes, was suggested. Most dioceses are both rich in some resources while lacking in other areas, and that sharing of all resources for the mission of the Church needs to be implemented across a national and even Oceanian/Asian perspective.

National standards and **national training/accreditation** should be implemented for all areas of lay and clerical formation, including a national school curriculum and national sacramental structures. Acolyte and catechist training/accreditations should be valid across diocesan boundaries, which would then more easily facilitate the sharing of human resources across dioceses.

The **administration of dioceses and parishes** needs to be more transparent, collaborative and flexible, while facilitating the engagement of the highest number of stakeholders as possible. All Catholics should be able to be involved in the process of selecting Church leadership positions, including parish priests, deans, bishops and even possible cardinals. Priests should be able to apply for the position of parish priest in any diocese in Australia and local parishes should be able to interview potential parish priests and make a recommendation to the bishop for possible appointments.

Closer ties between the Church in Australia and the Church in Pacific Island Nations and Asia, should be implemented pastorally, educationally, medically, spiritually and institutionally. On their own, the Catholic Church in most Oceanian countries will not be able to establish Catholic universities or Catholic hospitals without significant support from the wider Church. With support, coordination and leadership of the Church in Australia, university campuses or satellite hospitals could be established in various Oceania countries.

Furthermore, there should be regular interchange between seminaries in Australia and seminaries in the Pacific, and exchange programs for priests, teachers and nursing staff.

4. Prayer and Spirituality

The Prayer, Liturgy and Spirituality of the Church were identified as treasures of the Church that need to be preserved and encouraged, while also using methods and language that can help children to understand and relate to the message of the Gospel and the experience of prayer. Prayer, meditating on God's word, reflection, Bible studies, weekly Eucharistic Adoration and an Annual Retreat need to be a standard part of every Catholic's life and a part of every parish's activities. Life in the Spirit weekends that facilitate the power of God's love and the power of praise and worship also need to be a regular offering in every parish. Prayer for those in specific political and spiritual leadership positions (eg. Prime Minister, etc) should also be a regular part of the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass.

It was suggested that the liturgical experience needs to be livelier and fuller, especially with high quality music, even at daily Mass. Youth and young families need to receive a wide invitation to come to Mass, and parishes need to prepare for youth by possibly reserving seating for youth and having serious things for youth and families to do and to participate in while at Mass. Preparing our church and our liturgy for families and youth, and then engaging them with the power of the Gospel, should be tried at all levels.

PHASE 3: QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION FOR PLENARY 2020

1. Evangelisation and Outreach

- How can we as a parish community reach out to young families, elderly people and those on the margins of the Church, to accept them, welcome them and help them in their faith journey?
- What would Jesus do to reach modern society and how would he teach and preach if he came as saviour in 2020?
- How can we help people to experience a deeper personal relationship with God?

2. Social Communication and Media Tools for Proclaiming the Gospel

- What tools can Plenary 2020 provide so that modern technologies can be used for the purpose of evangelisation, worship and formation?
- When can bible studies (with good digital presentations) be produced for use with young families?
- Can an Australian Catholic TV/Video/Radio/Media Network be developed?
- How can the Church reclaim its place in mainstream media/society as an agent of God's mercy?

3. Formation, Education and Family Enrichment

- What tools can be provided to assist families with the faith development of their children?
- How can youth (aged 16-30) be effectively re-engaged in the life of the Church today?

4. Administration, Governance and sharing of resources between dioceses and across Australia and across the Region

- How can every Catholic feel, understand and live their faith as if they are shareholders of the family business that is the Church?
- How can the Church change the administrative structures to improve its evangelisation, prayer, pastoral care and mission?
- How can the Church be more transparent and communicate ideas more readily?
- Can Catholic speakers come to speak on a diocesan and deanery level?
- Can there be closer ties with Pacific (Oceania) and Asian countries, based on spirituality, education, health and sharing of resources?
- Could the Australian Bishops request Rome to allow Australia to participate in both the Oceania and the Asian Bishops Conferences?
- Could a National framework be established for a National seminary and national theological/ministry accreditation institution?

5. Prayer and Spirituality

- How can retreats become a regular and annual part of the commitment of every Catholic's life?
- How can the Divine Mercy and the personal experience of God's love be rediscovered in daily life today?

Prayer

Lord God, we give thanks for the inspiration of your Holy Spirit as we reflect on the Gospel call to exercise Christ's stewardship on our journey of faith. We ask you to guide us in our discernment, and show us how to be faithful in the plans we make, the actions we take, and the love we share on our pilgrim way. Give us the courage to find wisdom in our sacrifices, joy in our generosity, and hope in the compassion we show, especially to those most in need of your comfort and care. And create in us a more open heart and a greater awareness of our need to grow, to change, to be transformed, so that we may be better stewards of your gifts for the good of all.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.