

St Bernard's Parish Belmont

Annual Report 2021

Parish Vision

St Bernard's Parish is a strong, welcoming and hospitable community of faith, reaching out to build and strengthen relationships with God and each other.

74 Fryers Rd
BELMONT 3216

Ph : 52 432 739

belmont@cam.org.au

www.stbernards.org.au

Mass times :

Saturday : 6.00 pm

Sunday : 9 & 10.30 am

Wed & Thurs: 9.30am

Tuesday & Friday : 12 noon



Sacramental programme (Monday School) : Monday 4-5pm.

Baptisms : 12 noon on some Sundays each month.

RCIA : preparation begins October, culminating in Easter the following year

A little history ... In 1941 St Bernard's Parish was constituted and the first of two churches was built, on the corner of High & Regent Streets in Belmont.

In June 2003, following the sale of the High St site, a new church was blessed in Fryers Rd, around the corner from Clairvaux Catholic School. The two parish primary schools - St Bernard's Belmont & Mercia in Highton, had previously amalgamated and moved to the site in 1998.

St Patrick's Mount Moriac joined our parish in 2004.

The parish currently encompasses the suburbs of Belmont, Highton & Wandana Heights, as well as Ceres, Mt Moriac & surrounds.

Dear Friends,

In many ways, January 09, 2019, marked a significant change in my life, as I took up my new appointment to be the Administrator at St Bernard's. After one year, the Archbishop then decided to appoint me as the Parish Priest in early 2020. It was also the time when all of us, our world, was being terribly interrupted by Covid-19. The pandemic would cause us to close the doors to gathering for sacred Mass. All planned baptisms and weddings were placed on hold due to the closure. Even funeral Masses were halted, which placed a great strain on families who were grieving the death of a loved one.



At first, we all might have felt that we would be handicapped by the absence of our gatherings in person, but the Spirit of the Lord gave us another way to reach out and deal with the fears and doubts that the pandemic cast upon our lives. The creation of recorded Mass, allowed us to connect and stay united as community of faith. We have received much positive feedback from our parishioners, who found this unexpected liturgy online to be a great source of spiritual nourishment and comfort, in one of the most challenging times in our lives. We are very grateful to Greg and John Shawcross, who provided all the technical help needed and all those involved in this very special production of liturgy. I would also like to acknowledge the great effort and tremendous amount of work that Helen Brislane, our manager, has put in.

As the pandemic began to slow, via availability of vaccination, we could see people starting to come back to normal, in many aspects of life. Sunday Mass attendance increased weekly; many ministry groups could gather again in person; young people could organize their own activities, to provide space for youth in our community to share life and faith together.

As you read the report from the Chair of our Parish Leadership Team, you will find information, about my intention to bring a new governance structure for our parish, with various pillars. This structure was created with the hope that it will provide a more effective and transparent parish governance. The year 2019 did provide us with a luxurious time of normality to investigate this new structure. Unfortunately we could not properly implement it, due to interruptions by the pandemic. We hope and pray that with the 'new normal', the structure will be implemented and bring about a more engaged parish.

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all of you in the parish community, for your prayers, patience, great humour and ongoing and generous personal and financial support over the years, especially the last two most challenging years.

I believe that our community will never be the same again. However, the testing times always bring us to new horizons, for the development of our faith in Jesus.

Fr Sang Ho PP

PLT Chair's Report

I am delighted that St Bernard's Parish has produced this inaugural Annual Report, to inform parishioners of the financial, operational and liturgical aspects of the Parish. My report will cover the financial position and highlight some projects undertaken in 2021.

Three years ago when Fr Sang joined St Bernard's Parish, he asked the then Parish Council members to investigate and implement a new Parish Governance Structure. Following due consideration, the new structure was introduced to provide advice to the Parish Priest and involve more Parishioners in a streamlined discussion and reporting format.



This structure with key responsibilities for each pillar is detailed, following Fr Sang and my reports. This structure has worked well, but it needs a review as it's been severely affected by COVID restrictions.

The financial position is healthy, with a 2021 net profit of \$8,957, although this was significantly bolstered by JobKeeper, Parishioner generosity-thanksgiving (66% of income) and fundraising (6% of income). Thank you for your continued financial contribution as the Parish would not function without it.

The balance sheet at 31/12/2021 shows that St Bernard's Parish has \$5.7 million in net assets with the Church and School accounting for \$4.3 million. St Bernard's Parish is debt free, which is a significant advantage when compared to other Parishes.

During 2021, the church lighting was upgraded at considerable cost. We also installed a new overhead projector and screen. Due to the improved lighting and projector, the presentation is now a lot clearer. A defibrillator was purchased and installed in the Church. I would like to thank Pauline Gilmore for this initiative and her help fundraising.

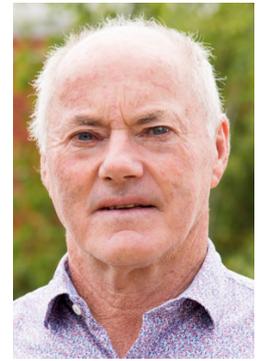
The PLT instituted a different way of engaging Parishioners during COVID restrictions and hopefully Parishioners still felt connected to St Bernard's, even though we couldn't attend Mass and other liturgical celebrations.

Finally, I'd like to thank Fr Sang, Helen, Muriel and Len Monk (prior to his retirement) for their tireless work. And I would like to thank PLT and Pillar members for their contribution. A big thank you to all Parish volunteers (over 130 during COVID restrictions) for everything that you do for the Parish.

I end on a call for more volunteers, as the Parish always needs willing helpers who can contribute their hands or minds.

Dennis Barker

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Principal **Basil Flynn** e : bflynn@ccsbelmont.com.au



While we headed into school at the beginning of the 2021 school year with some hesitation, there was, however, a quiet optimism that what we had been through in 2020 was behind us and things could only get better. And while Covid and the restrictions that go with it did prove to be challenging, Clairvaux had much to celebrate in 2021.

Due largely to the efforts of *Fr Sang, Helen, John Doherty* (our Religious Education Leader) and *Maree O'Dwyer* (Religious Education Leader support) we were able to successfully hold Reconciliation for our grade 3 students, Eucharist for the grade 4's and Confirmation for the grade 6 group. There were some limitations, but we were one of a group of very few schools who were able to achieve this.

Our school sports, special celebration days, assemblies and other annual events were able to take place, but without the presence of parents and carers, or other family members. I would like to acknowledge the support of parents and carers throughout the year and the amazing work of our staff who made things possible.

It was another very demanding year for our students, who again had to endure remote learning, but it was such a great feeling when they were able to all return to school as a group.

The positivity and relief from all members of the Clairvaux community is something I will not forget for a long time.

2021 saw the "changing of the guard" around school governance, as responsibility was handed from the Parish Priest to Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Inc.

MACS is ultimately answerable to the Archbishop of Melbourne. While there will be many benefits with the change in governance and clearly many Parish Priests have enough to do, let alone run their Parish School, I personally feel that much of the individuality our schools had will now be lost, as the incoming blue print demands that we are all the same.

I would like to thank *Fr Sang* and *Fr Vince* before him, who were a pleasure to work for and so supportive. I feel very lucky to have worked for and with them.

Clairvaux is very fortunate to have the facilities we have and the hall and spacious grounds are a luxury many other schools would like. Demand for places in 2022 is strong and our students are appreciative of the work our staff do.

I feel very lucky to be the Principal of Clairvaux Catholic School, Belmont.

Basil Flynn

Parish Leadership Team 2021 : Fr Sang Ho, PP : Dennis Barker, Chair



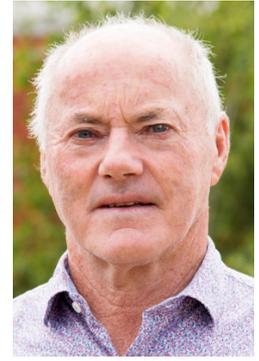
Nelan Dias



Sandra Dillon



John Doherty



Basil Flynn



Len Monk



Muriel Powell



Brian Sherwell



Helen Brislane (ex officio)

Parish Leadership Team - 2019 re-structure

Parish Priest

Parish Manager, School Principal, Pastoral Associate, Elected parishioners

The Parish Leadership Team comprises 5 pillars

Finance & Management - Finance planning, Budgeting, Compliance, Audit & Risk Management, Health & Safety, Fund-raising & Marketing

Liturgy - Music, Children's Liturgy, Communion to the Sick, Baptism Preparation, Book Nook.

Education in Faith - School education, Catechists (Sacramental programme) RCIA, Special events (Archdiocesan Office for Evangelisation), e-conferences

Outreach & Engagement - St Vincent de Paul, Neighbourhood Meals, Social Justice, Passionist Family Groups, Men's Group, Playgroup, Bereavement Care, Widowed & Social Group, Youth engagement, Manny, Communication (print/website/social media), Knights of the Southern Cross, Plenary Council

Infrastructure - Building & Grounds committee, Cleaners, Gardeners, Grounds, O H & S

PILLAR REPORTS :

LITURGY : In 2021, like so much else, our liturgies were impacted by COVID.

The **Mass count** during May for the Archdiocese census averaged 344 people attending each weekend.

Masses : Mass was **recorded** on 14 weekends of lockdowns. Our sincere thanks to the Shawcross family, Greg, John & Ian, who gave their time & expertise to enable this - often at short notice.

From October to December Fr Sang celebrated an extra Mass at 1pm each Sunday, for those who were unvaccinated. 30-50 people regularly attended & a talented family provided music. Each week the Passionist Fathers **record Mass**. A link was sent to all on request.

This is on-going & greatly appreciated, for those unable to come to Mass.

Details of recorded, TV & radio Masses were included on the website & in the bulletin.

Weekday masses continued when possible.

Communion to the sick continued to be a much appreciated ministry, by those at home & in care. Whenever restrictions allowed, a dedicated team continued to visit.

Highlights :

- *Sacred remembrance space* set up during November
- *Christmas : nativity & advent wreath* all new location & set up
- *Faith4Climate Action Prayer Service*
- *Plenary Council* – link to each day's interesting & challenging discussions available through the bulletin.

Sacraments

Baptisms -115

First Eucharist - 85

RCIA - 6

Funerals - 31 (sadly, often with only 10 or 50 people able to attend, with webcasts for those at home)

Reconciliation - 211 (2020 & 2021 group)

Confirmation - 101

Weddings - 0

EDUCATION IN FAITH :

2021 saw the year begin with 98 children who had prepared for the sacrament of **Reconciliation** in 2020, finally able to receive the sacrament over two nights in early February. This was quickly followed by 101 children, including 3 RCIC candidates, receiving the Sacrament of **Confirmation** in March, conferred by Fr Albert Yogarajah, the Episcopal vicar for the Western Region. 84 children participated in their **first Eucharist** in small family groups, at regular Parish masses over three weeks in June. The later part of the year saw another 111 children receive their first **Reconciliation** over three nights in November.

COVID lockdowns and restrictions resulted in some changes to the way the children prepared for the sacraments. **Home booklets** were provided to families to assist them in preparing their child at home and support classroom learning. The smaller groups at celebrations resulted in intimate family groups, with children able to share their learning experiences.

We were fortunate to have the support of other priests from Corio and Meredith to assist Fr Sang in the Reconciliation liturgies.

Six **RCIA** candidates received the sacraments at the Easter Vigil.

OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT : There are over 2,500 families on our parish data base.

Parish groups (visit the [website](#) for more information about these groups)

Men's Group : Widowed & Social Group : Youth Group : Playgroup : Passionist Family Groups : Knitters.

Parish ministries :

Bereavement Care : Friday communion

Social Justice & support :

St Vincent de Paul : Justice Network : Tuesday bread distribution

Communication :

Thanks to the work of *Muriel Powell*, guided by Fr Sang's friend *Fr Trac Nguyen*, the **website** has undergone a complete upgrade. www.stbernards.org.au is now a great resource for all information about the Parish.

Facebook. *Thank you to Jasna Brdar*, who kept the page current & interesting until her retirement.

Weekly bulletin. We are very fortunate to have the skills of *Amanda Morris*, who volunteers to prepare much of the layout & content each week. The bulletin brings you parish news & also a window into the wider church. It is delivered via email to over 600 parishioners & friends each week. During the Plenary Council, it included links to daily updates. Paper copies are also delivered to those at home (on request).

The **Saving Word** (Sunday readings) & **LOOK** (children's worksheet) are emailed on request.

Mannya - The *Mannya Advisory Committee* meets regularly & liases with Fr Emma.

In 2021 the focus was on supporting students. 26 students from various primary, secondary & vocational schools received sponsorship from 14 parishioners.

Volunteers : (131 in 2021). This number halved from previous years, due to restrictions under COVID. A number of volunteer roles were suspended eg church cleaners, 9am cuppa after Mass & Book Nook. **Mass ministries** ie. Mass set up, Powerpoint, Reader/commentator, Eucharist minister, Friday communion to those at home or in care & work in the gardens & grounds continued. During a quiet time, *Bill & Rita* spread 13 cubic metres of red gum chips to mulch & beautify the gardens.

INFRASTRUCTURE :

The Parish has funded and arranged various upgrades and one major project concluded during 2021.

The **major project** was the much-needed **replacement of the Presbytery**. The building was designed as a welcoming and homely residence for our Parish Priest and sized to provide accommodation for visiting clergy and visitors. A particular emphasis on the new build, was passive solar design and energy efficiency, allowing the parish to contribute to a sustainable environment.

Minor projects included some works to improve the experiences for parishioners.

- Lighting throughout the church as upgraded, providing a much-improved energy efficiency, replacing high wattage halogen lights with highly efficient LED lighting. The new lighting also improves the lighting levels.

- While the pews were shifted for access, work was included to remove the redundant and high-running cost under-carpet heating. This work improves the safety of the flooring as the cabling was presenting some tripping hazard. Costs were approximately \$20,000.
- The projector and screen were replaced to improve the audio visual experience and provide a wide screen format, that is common for software by many of the users. The works also included new cabling through the ceiling space between the projector and AV room. Cost of these works were approx. \$9300 and were shared with the school community on a 50/50 basis.
- Computers upgraded in office and church for a cost \$6,187
- Shade cloth on the east pergola area was replaced due to storm damage at a cost of \$970
- A Defibrillator was installed in October, with \$2,295 donated by Parishioners and generous support from the Belmont Senior Citizens.

During the year the Parish worked with the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS), that was set up as the overarching school authority. This work entailed identifying property owned by the Parish and used by Clairvaux School, to become part of a long-term lease arrangement to MACS. This process was in line with all Parishes and Schools in the Archdiocese.

The following projects are in the **planning mode for 2022** and include preemptive work during 2021:

- Identifying and preparing a scheduled repairs and maintenance program;
- Planning the relocation of the Memorial Wall to a more private and welcoming area of church surrounds, whilst removing the potential for vehicle damage;
- Working with MACS and Council on alleviating ongoing stormwater drainage issues
- Investigating options for an outdoor stage area for special events (including the Outdoor Christmas Mass)
- Upgrading the Wi-Fi interface between the Church and Parish Office to facilitate much needed Wi-Fi benefits for the Church
- Grounds maintenance and improvement
- Master-planning for Parish Infrastructure

FINANCE & MANAGEMENT :

Finance report - refer to Report from the PLT Chair & pages 10 & 11.

The '**Tap & Go**' contactless donation option was introduced & is an increasingly popular option.

Rental income – The Parish receives regular income from the National Council of Priests & occasional hire by other community groups.

Risk management procedures include updating the COVID safety plan as required, ensuring compliance with Child Safe policies & procedures (see web site), following an Annual Programmed Maintenance Schedule & revising the Emergency Management Plan.

Fund-raising :

Peter & Margaret Wills co-ordinate our two primary fund-raising projects - the annual **Book Fair** & on-going stall at the **Newcomb Mill Market**. Thanks to the *continuing generous donations from parishioners*, there is a steady supply of goods for both. *Four volunteers* are rostered each month at the Market. In 2021 these efforts combined to raise \$14,552.

Special collections :

St Bernard's parishioners give generously to special collections. In 2021 \$17,635.45 was paid directly into the accounts of : *St Vincent de Paul, Melbourne Overseas Mission, Holy Places, Catholic Care, Propagation of the Faith, Catholic Deaf & the Priests Retirement Fund.*

FAREWELLS :

Len Monk : In June 2021, Len retired from his position as Pastoral Associate at St Bernard's. Len spent a total of 18 years in this role. Firstly from 1991 to 2002, then in 2014 he accepted Fr Vince's invitation and returned. He is well known to many, having lived & worked here for so many years.



A project very dear to his heart was the *Neighbourhood Meals*. This endeavour saw Len personally deliver invitations to all known parishioners in the Parish (over 2,000 families), to share a meal with a small group of others who live nearby. This was a mammoth undertaking, which established many connections.

Len's other main areas of responsibility included : wide ranging *pastoral care & visitation*, co-ordination of the *RCIA* programme, *adult faith formation* & the *Justice Group*.

Len brought unflagging enthusiasm & a wealth of practical & spiritual knowledge to his role. Sadly, COVID restrictions limited the farewell we would have liked to extend to Len.

Louise Anderson has moved to an International School in Bangkok.

Louise was *Deputy Principal* at Clairvaux for a number of years & worked with parish staff on joint projects like the *Prep Welcome*. We wish her well in her new & challenging role.

Knights of the Southern Cross – After 61 years, the Belmont branch of KSC formally closed down. The KSC have been staunch supporters of the parish & parishioners for many years. The move to this site saw members helping out at working bees & assisting where needed eg car park organisation every Good Friday.

Secondary student scholarship assistance has been a significant project for many years.

Visitors :

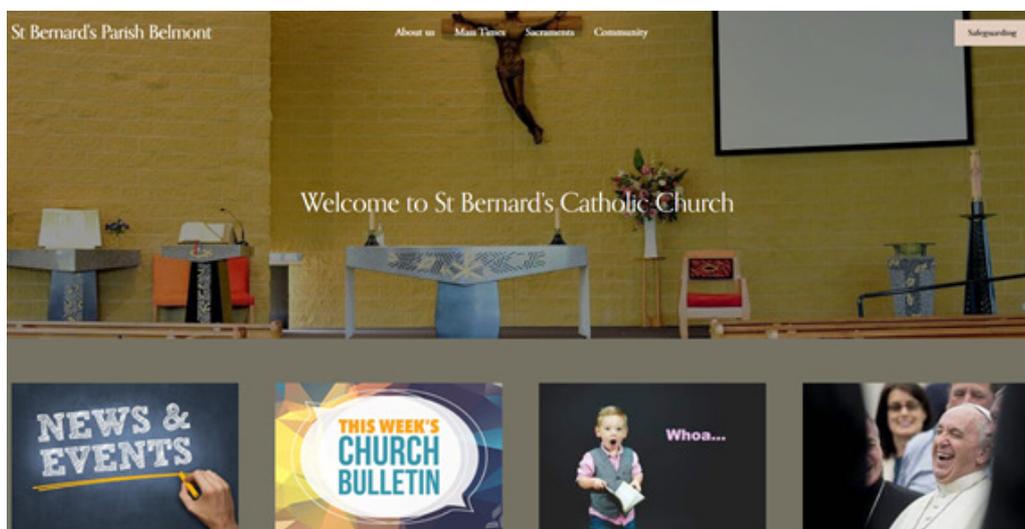
Over Easter in 2021, we welcomed **John Vespa** from the seminary & **Br Trung**, from the Redemptorist monastery, who came to experience Easter in a parish.

We enjoyed having them with us & hope they found it an enriching experience.



During July & August, (Melbourne) **Deacon Ignatius Tan** travelled from the seminary in Rome, to also share parish life for two months. Sadly, most of that time was spent under restriction, so parishioner contact was limited, but he & Fr Sang learnt much from one another.

Visit : www.stbernards.org.au for all the latest news in the Parish



Profit and Loss

For the year ended 31 December 2021

Account 2021 2020

Account	2021	2020
Trading Income		
Donations Received	1,105.00	525.10
Funerals	8,550.00	5,600.00
Interest Income	1,136.59	8,837.61
Monday School	5,850.00	7,175.00
Other Income, including Fund-raising eg Book Fair	14,552.45	6,880.77
Rental Income	20,477.81	19,597.54
Sacramental Program	4,950.00	4,295.00
Sale of Resources	1,000.00	454.50
Thanksgiving Income	171,725.31	146,704.10
Total Trading Income	229,347.16	200,069.62
Gross Profit	229,347.16	200,069.62
Other Income		
Business Support Fund – Expansion program	0.00	15,000.00
Cashflow Boost	0.00	20,000.00
JobKeeper Deposits	22,500.00	93,600.00
Special Collections	(100.00)	(200.00)
Total Other Income	22,400.00	128,400.00
Operating Expenses		
Bank Fees	1,087.47	808.14
Bookkeeping Expenses	569.06	545.40
Books, Resources and Publications	757.24	518.65
Catering	27.99	757.25
Church Requisites	832.51	658.89
Cleaning	1,335.47	667.48
Depreciation	597.32	853.31
Diocesan Levy	22,540.00	6,308.00
Electricity, Gas and Water	3,230.17	3,633.17
Equipment - Immediate Write Off	15,393.42	1,296.27
Freight & Postage	450.51	755.00
General Expenses	2,490.55	671.26
Insurance	20,122.90	17,180.42
Liturgical Expenses	4,377.93	3,449.10
Long Service Leave	2,341.56	2,064.29
Management Accounting Fees	4,770.00	4,960.00
Memorial Wall Expenses	272.73	(1,118.15)
Monday School Expenses	310.50	927.26
Motor Vehicle Expenses	190.05	110.72
Office Expenses	47.86	0.00
Printing, Photocopying & Stationery	4,797.12	5,622.81
Rates and taxes	920.85	2,879.90
Repairs and Maintenance	10,674.87	26,706.48
Sacramental Expenses	943.46	992.28
Salaries and wages	110,556.76	138,452.86
Security	0.00	240.00
Staff Amenities and Training	735.93	340.91
Subscriptions	2,941.54	2,578.72
Superannuation	24,624.18	25,796.56
Supply Fees	700.00	0.00
Telephone & Internet	3,138.37	4,330.14
Workcover	1,011.55	902.31
Total Operating Expenses	242,789.87	253,889.43
Net Profit	8,957.29	74,580.19

Balance Sheet

St Bernard's Parish

As at 31 December 2021

Account	31 Dec 2021	31 Dec 2020
Assets		
Bank		
CDF 1 account	204,308.81	255,032.26
CDF 2 account	15,710.50	5,380.71
CDF Long Service	24,802.33	22,090.10
CDF Term Deposit	246,782.35	245,676.30
CommBank Church account	10,662.61	35,080.40
Memorial Wall	17,619.32	17,917.56
Total Bank	519,885.92	581,177.33
Current Assets		
Accounts Receivable	930.00	788.00
Mannya CBA Account	27,940.56	40,000.00
Total Current Assets	28,870.56	40,788.00
Fixed Assets		
Furniture & Equipment	14,138.06	14,138.06
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Furniture & Equipment	(12,744.32)	(12,147.00)
Presbytery Re-development	718,085.37	600,574.72
Total Fixed Assets	719,479.11	602,565.78
Non-current Assets		
Church - 74 Fryers Rd	2,224,822.99	2,224,822.99
Clairvaux School - Reynolds Rd	2,080,132.18	2,080,132.18
Presbytery - 54 Fryers Rd	163,511.03	163,511.03
Total Non-current Assets	4,468,466.20	4,468,466.20
Total Assets	5,736,701.79	5,692,997.31
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	0.00	267.89
GST	(1,422.57)	(33,097.09)
Mannya Collections & Payments	1,569.00	980.00
PAYG Withholdings Payable	3,412.00	3,002.00
Provision for Long Service Leave	25,142.32	22,800.76
Total Current Liabilities	28,700.75	(6,046.44)
Total Liabilities	28,700.75	(6,046.44)
Net Assets	5,708,001.04	5,699,043.75
Equity		
Current Year Earnings	8,957.29	74,580.19
Retained Earnings	5,699,043.75	5,624,463.56
Total Equity	5,708,001.04	5,699,043.75

