

The Eyrie

St John The Evangelist Catholic Parish Heidelberg



175th Anniversary of Parish THANKSGIVING MASS Sunday 3rd May 2026

Most Reverend Peter A Comensoli, Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne concelebrated a special Mass at 10.30 am to commemorate the 175th Anniversary of St. John the Evangelist Parish Heidelberg.

Despite a cold, rainy day the church was packed and St. John's schoolchildren sat at the front during the mass. After Archbishop Peter completed his homily he then sat with the children for a chat; they listened intently as he talked about the St. John's window and the importance of the occasion. All who were present at this special Mass were delighted to be part of this historic celebration.



1851—2026

**Remember
Rejoice
Renew**



REJOICING



Some of the Living Legends presented with certificates



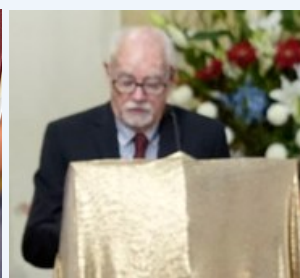
Thank you to the "Willing Workers" who set up everything on Saturday in readiness for the celebrations on Sunday 3rd May.
Mary, Marguerite, Kylie, Sue, Bobbie, Kate & Tina.
Chris and Chris on the BBQ did a fabulous job as well.
Leo & Wendy Hernandez spent two days remaking the stage and decorating the hall and their daughter (last year's school captain) Clara presented the posy.



(left) Marianne Kos presented with posy as past pupil of St. John's and school captain in the 1950's.

(Right) Parish Pastoral Council





Fr Ted Teal, Fr Anthony Girolami, Fr Pat Purcell, Fr John Pereira, Fr Micheal Angel, (previous priest who served in our parish) joined with Fr Vinh (Parish Priest) and Fr Geo (Assistant Priest) to concelebrate Mass with the Archbishop. The handwritings by parishioners of St. John's Gospel were presented in a bound book to the Archbishop for blessing. Sr Loretto on the organ, Paul on clarinet, the parish choir and St. John's parishioners lifted their voices in song. St. John's school children proudly sang their school song at the end of the Mass. Sr Emma and Our Lady of Mercy College representatives also joined us.



175TH ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER

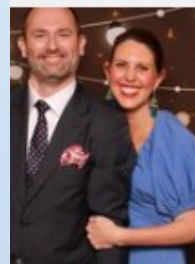
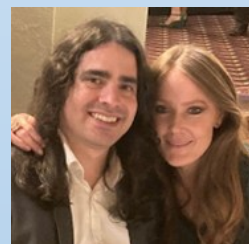
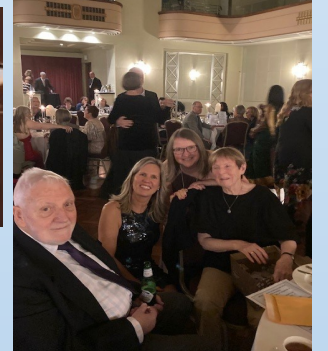
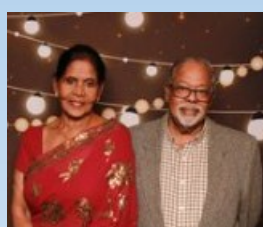


PHOTO BOOTH
FUN



REJOICE!



175TH ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER



The Gala Dinner on 29th May was a resounding success. Sincere thanks to our generous parishioners and local Heidelberg businesses. The Fred Liuzzi Foundation (Mary Liuzzi & family) along with the Old England and Sir Henry Barkly Hotels were our major sponsors. Loretta Cassisi from Cassisi Architects sponsored the photo booth on the night and it was a great addition and many enjoyed taking whacky photos together.

Peter Casamento donated some wonderful photo artworks of our church windows that fetched a good auction price and Tilnak Fine Art Portraits also donated generous photo packages.

Tom Bechelli (a parishioner) Director and Auctioneer from Jellis Craig Rosanna did a great job with our six fabulous live auctions. There was strong bidding in the room and a great result. We had over 60 silent auction items as well as a raffle on the night. A tidy sum of over \$10,000 was raised to get our church renewal fund started.

Priests from surrounding parishes joined us for the evening. Michelle Penson (Chair of the 175th Committee and the Parish Pastoral Council) gave the welcome address and spoke about the 150th some 25 years ago, this historic occasion and the venue. She said the night was about remembering, rejoicing and celebrating parish family together. There was a real sense of community and joy.

The teachers from St John's Primary School really showed their talents on the dance floor and were winners for sure but others older and younger certainly kept the dance floor warm and alive.

Fr Vinh gave the "Thank You" at the end of the night and thanked the committee, and parishioners for coming and sharing in the great night, and for the generosity of those that gave items for auction. He spoke of the importance of putting into parish and our community now and into the future.



Term 2

Rejoicing in Faith, Community and Learning

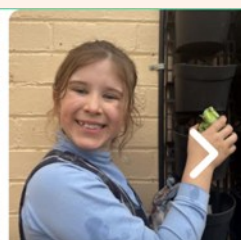
Term 2 has been a wonderful season of celebration, gratitude, and connection for the St John's Catholic Parish School community. As we reflect on the many experiences that have enriched our school this term, we have much to rejoice in.



Our students demonstrated perseverance, determination, and school spirit during the Cross Country and Whole School Athletics Day. These events showcased not only athletic achievement but also the encouragement, support, and camaraderie students showed one another, reflecting the values of teamwork and resilience that are central to our community.



GARDEN CLUB—Students have also embraced opportunities through Gardening Club, excursions, sporting events, leadership initiatives, faith celebrations, Better Buddy Day, and a wide range of classroom learning experiences. Each of these opportunities has helped strengthen our sense of belonging and community.



Term 2

Year 6 Camp



Our Year 6 students also enjoyed a memorable camp experience in Canberra. Through visits to significant national landmarks and institutions, students deepened their understanding of Australia's democracy, history, and identity while developing independence, resilience, and lasting friendships. The camp provided invaluable learning experiences and memories that will stay with them for years to come.

175TH ANNIVERSARY MASS—A particular highlight of the term was the celebration of the 175th Anniversary of St John's Parish and School.

The theme of ***Rejoice*** was beautifully reflected throughout the celebration as we gave thanks for the many blessings bestowed upon St John's over the past 175 years. We acknowledged the generations of students, families, teachers, clergy, and parishioners whose faith, dedication, and service have helped shape the vibrant and faith-filled community we enjoy today.



Our students represented the school with great pride, singing our school song, *Labora et Ora – We Work and Pray*. Their enthusiasm, reverence, and sense of belonging were evident throughout the celebration and served as a wonderful reminder of the values that continue to guide our school community.

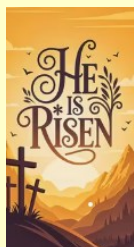
NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

During National Reconciliation Week, students engaged in meaningful learning experiences that deepened their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and contributions. Through prayer, reflection, storytelling, and classroom activities, students explored ways they can contribute to reconciliation and walk together with respect, understanding, and hope.

EASTER CEREMONIES



The Easter Triduum—all ceremonies were very well attended and received. Washing of the feet on Holy Thursday and staying with the Lord keeping watch, and praying. Then Good Friday morning stations of the cross the cross was carried by various parishioners and the stations were read from Mary's perspective and very thought provoking. The church was packed again at the 3pm service and Veneration of the Cross. At the Easter Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday the fire was lit and the newly lit pascal candle taken into a darkened church symbolising the light of Christ.



ALLELUIA

We respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri People and their Elders past and present, the traditional custodians of this land on which our church and school stand. The St John's Community joins together in solidarity with our Indigenous brothers and sisters, working for justice and reconciliation.

Journey to Becoming Catholic

Finding Jesus in 2024 and embracing the Catholic faith

If you had told me at the beginning of 2024 that I would be baptised into the Catholic Church, I honestly would have been shocked. Before that year, I was an atheist — organised religion played no part in my life, and I had little interest or respect for it.

But God had a plan. Through a powerful personal encounter with Jesus and a series of unexplainable events that I can only see as divine guidance, my heart was opened.

I started attending a Pentecostal church for less than a year, and it was a great experience that helped me grow in faith. Yet the Lord soon directed me onto a new path — the RCIA course. I wasn't 100% sure it was what I wanted at first; it felt like a big step into the unknown. But I chose to let the Lord guide me.



(Our new Catholics—Amy, Mark, Jacob and Amy from the RCIA group and Mark's two sons Byron and Alfie who undertook the Sacramental Program.)

As I began attending Mass regularly and delved into the history, theology, and beautiful reasons behind Catholic traditions and practices, I came to see the profound depth and beauty of the faith. The sacraments, and the continuity with the early Church resonated with me.

A great joy of this journey has been sharing it with my family. I was able to bring my two eldest boys along with me on the RCIA path. Having them standing together with me as we were all baptised into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil was an unforgettable memory.



I was excited to receive Communion for the first time, but I wasn't prepared for how powerful the experience would actually be. It created a profound new connection to Jesus — a real, tangible encounter with His presence in the Eucharist. I'm also really excited about the future at St. John's. There's so much potential here, and I hope to play a positive role in its growth — serving the parish

This is just the beginning of my journey. I'm thankful for every step the Lord has guided me through — I continue to pray that He draws even more people — including the rest of my family — closer to His heart.

Mark Lownsborough

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ST. JOHN'S PARISH GAMES, FUN & TRIVIA NIGHT

SATURDAY 25TH JULY

PARISH HALL

7.05PM

BYO FOOD & DRINKS

PRIZES & ICE CREAMS PROVIDED!

ALL WELCOME—\$15 PER HEAD

CHILDREN FREE

FR VINH NGUYEN—ST. JOHN’S PARISH PRIEST

REJOICING

This year, our parish family of St John the Evangelist Heidelberg has every reason to rejoice.

For 175 years, generations of faithful people have gathered here to pray, celebrate, serve, and hand on the faith. Through changing times and seasons, God has remained faithful to this community, and we give thanks for the countless parishioners, priests, religious, teachers, families, and volunteers who have shaped the life of our parish.

Over the past few weeks, that spirit of rejoicing has been beautifully visible. On Sunday 3rd May, we were honoured to celebrate our anniversary Mass with Archbishop Peter, giving thanks together for the rich history and living faith of our parish community. It was a joyful and prayerful occasion that reminded us that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves — a faith journey stretching across generations.

Then on 29th May, many parishioners, friends, and guests gathered for our Gala Dinner. It was an evening filled with gratitude, stories, laughter, memories, and hope for the future. We celebrated not only buildings or milestones, but people — the people who continue to make St John’s a welcoming and faith-filled community today.

These events are only part of a wider year of celebration. Many more gatherings, liturgies, and activities are still to come throughout this anniversary year. Each one is an opportunity not simply to remember the past, but to renew our commitment to the mission entrusted to us now: to be a parish that proclaims the Gospel, welcomes others, supports one another, and brings Christ’s love to the wider community.

Rejoicing is deeply Christian. We rejoice because God has blessed us abundantly. We rejoice because faith continues to live in our parish community. We rejoice because new generations continue to find a home here. And we rejoice because the story of St John’s is still being written.

May this anniversary year deepen our gratitude, strengthen our unity, and inspire us to move forward with renewed faith, hope, and joy.

Fr Vinh-Parish Priest



Fr Geo, Fr Anthony Girolami, Fr Vinh, Archbishop Peter Comensoli, Fr Pat Purcell, Fr John Pereira, Fr Ted Teal

The Eyrie

OUR TEAM

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**YOUR FEEDBACK and
ARTICLES MOST WELCOME**

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***Please contact the parish
secretary 03 9457 1066***

**Saturday 25th July
GAMES, FUN & TRIVIA NIGHT
PARISH HALL 7.05PM**

**SATURDAY AUGUST 8TH
FEAST OF MARY MACKILLOP
Mass & Morning Tea**

**Thursday 13th & Friday 14th
St. John's School Performance**

**Saturday 15th August
FEAST OF ASSUMPTION**

**Friday 28th August
Parish Confirmation**

**Sunday 13th September
THANKSGIVING MASS FOR THE
SISTERS OF MERCY
Mass & Morning Tea**
