

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

On Tuesday 6 February we held our first meeting of the Parish Advisory Group for 2024. Summarised below are some of the key topics of discussion.

1. Safeguarding Report

Diana Gedeon's safeguarding report was tabled, noting that the safeguarding audit was successfully completed and submitted on 30 November 2023. It was noted that a more detailed safeguarding report would be provided following the site visit on 6 February 2024.

2. Parish Census & Systems Update

Christian Townsend attended via phone to provide the Parish Advisory Group with an update on the status of the systems upgrade and the census.

It was noted that Christian, assisted by a small team of parishioners, had completed the cleansing of 12,500 records, on the transfer of those records from PACs to the new planning centre system, on which the census data will be recorded. Next steps are to include systems training for office staff.

3. Parish Priest Report

Fr Richard shared with us some recent highlights:

- The 22 day Advent reflection resource "With Expectant Hearts" sold out (160 copies)
- Fr Sacha's Advent talks on November 30, December 7 and December 21 were successfully attended
- The Tongan Choir from Mt Druitt returned to the St Francis Xavier 5.30pm mass on December 2, the Feast Day of St Francis Xavier. The pizza reception saw a good mingling of communities
- A Thanksgiving Mass and lunch for OLW catechists took place on December 8 at the Ron Dyer Centre
- The Christmas High Tea was celebrated on December 10 at the Ron Dyer Centre which was successfully attended
- The Advent Thanksgiving Service and reception on Thursday 14 December was attended by 300 people
- The Advent Rite of Reconciliation at St Marys held on Monday December 18 was attended by 200 people, with 10 priests available
- An estimated 5,000 people attended Christmas masses across the parish. The Christmas collection was \$16,200. It has been suggested that Christmas Day mass for 2024 move from 10.30am to 9.30am, so that those who need to travel for Christmas lunch are able to do so
- The Parish Profile was distributed at the Christmas masses which was well received
- Options are being considered for the PA system at St Marys and St Francis Xavier, which does not perform optimally when overloaded
- Pope Francis designated 2024 as the year of prayer in preparation for the Jubilee in 2025
- The Jesuit Superior General visited Sydney on January 27
- Several school student and staff masses have been celebrated at Monte St Angelo, Loreto and MCCNS
- A meeting with the four College Principals and their Directors of Mission took place on Wednesday January 31, at which the ongoing program of engagement with Catholic schools was approved
- The safeguarding audit site visit took place on February 6

- In line with the Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith's "Fiducia Supplicans" approved by Pope Francis on December 18, 2023, the parish offered a blessing to any LGBTQI+ parishioners

4. Proposed Toilet in St Marys Church

Steve Urwin and Fr Richard provided the Parish Advisory Group with an update on their enquiries into the possibility of building a toilet in St Marys church. In summary, the cost and challenges involved due to the location of underground services / drainage make this proposal uneconomical.

It was suggested that signage to the toilets in the Ron Dyer centre be improved.

5. Parish events

Mary McInerney advised that planning was progressing for the parish dinner at Mary McKillop on April 13. Maximum places available total 128.

6. Jarjum Proposal

A proposal prepared by Fr Sacha was tabled, outlining possible areas for support and engagement between parishioners and Jarjum College in Redfern. It was agreed that offers for assistance, together with an invitation to attend a tour of the College would be advertised in the parish bulletin.

Nicole Siddique on behalf of the Parish Advisory Group