



Towards Christmas

It is now over six months since those momentous days around the death of John Paul II and the election of Benedict XVI. They were truly extraordinary days in which the attention of the world seemed to be transfixed for a short time on Rome and, for some of us, it was as though time had stopped. Many will reflect on it in their own way but what seems to be at the heart of those precious days is that the events of Calvary, in the full glare of television cameras, were being lived out again in front of our eyes. Very deliberately God was asking the Pope to be a vehicle to show forth his unconditional and endless love for all people at Calvary, when the Son of God is crucified it seems to be a defeat but in truth it was a victory of love and mercy for all time. In this last year we have witnessed the same. It is that which explains something of the tumultuous events acted out in Rome.

homeless, work with drug addicts, the SOS Prayerline, the work of the School of Evangelisation and other activities that we can forget what we are about, namely, the giving and receiving of the Love of God. For us to be able to do this a time of stillness and quietness is needed. That is what Advent and Christmas offer us.

Please in that stillness pray that the work of the Parish may be a witness to the Love of God as we try to reach out to others – also that we ourselves will find that stillness so that we can journey together to Bethlehem. Thank you also for all that you do to help the Parish and for your love and prayers. Please continue to do so as we journey into the New Year. May you and all your family and friends know the love and joy of the Christ Child at this time.

God bless,
Fr. Alexander

As we live the Season of Advent and prepare for Christmas each of us is invited to open ourselves to the God of Love who is to be born into our world. So much conspired against the events of Bethlehem and the plan of God two thousand years ago but still, love triumphed and so it must be in our time. Despite all the difficulties which the world witnesses and we also the Love of God continues to knock at the doors of our hearts waiting to be invited in.

Christmas sees the West End and Parish empty. It can seem a little bit like a ghost town, however, the parish's work of proclaiming and living out the love of God continues. At times there is so much busyness here what with the outreach to the



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Tomasz (Poland)

I came to the school because I wanted to give time to God and listen to him more carefully. I hope that I will discover his will in my life during the coming months and that I will follow his calling.

Greg (Scotland)

This is a beautiful experience! We are really blessed to be able to live with Jesus in our hearts every day. Praise God!

Barbara (Poland)

SPES is one of the best things which I have ever received from God. Amongst many things I enjoy Open House very much. This is when we serve food for the homeless.

Magdalena

(Czech Republic)

I joined the school because I thought it would be the best place to prepare me for Missionary work; I learn about God, improve my English and experience the support of the community.

Anna (Poland)

I have received a big gift; an opportunity to experience the life of a Catholic community, an opportunity to deepen my prayer life, relationship with my neighbour and, above all, the space to root my life in Christ.



Jeanine (Canada -

"from just-outside-of-Toronto")

If joy is a net to catch souls SPES teaches me how to fish! This time with Our Lord is a gift to me — thank you Jesus! His grace and blessings are far beyond this world and anything one could imagine. The true joy in my heart is indescribable... must go fishing!

Paul (USA)

I came to St. Patrick's to strengthen my understanding of Catholicism and to enrich my prayer life. The program has proved to be so much more. Not only do we study and pray on a daily basis but we are learning to live in community and are involved in outreach to the poor. More than anything we are learning more about who we are as individuals in relation to God.

Rachel (USA)

I love the school because it is a year devoted to spiritual space. It is not time out because everything is changing, moving inside you and in your life in a radical way. You are continually challenged by God to grow in ways you did not plan. Above all the rhythm of life is so focused on God that you are continually reminded of the call to put Christ as the centre and energy of all that we are and do.

Robbie (Slovakia)

I came to London to study English and have fun. Two years later I realized that I needed to change my lifestyle. My values started to change and so did my views. Since the school activities commenced, I find it most enjoyable to devote my time and energies to Jesus and see how He works within us.

SPES — St Patrick's Evangelisation School

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Fundraising



I recently joined the team here to help co-ordinate the fundraising efforts for St Patrick's major Appeal for the restoration of the church and development of the community centre.

We have spent the first six months pulling together the many elements of this Appeal by creating a new website and brochure to demonstrate the scope of the work involved and the enormity of this undertaking. With every faith in God's good grace I believe we have all the necessary materials required. I look forward to the official launch of the Appeal on the 31st January 2006 at 6:30pm with Mass celebrated by Bishop Longley to bless all our efforts in the years that lay ahead.

I feel privileged to be working with a wonderful group of people, helping restore and renovate this historic Parish and am confident we will achieve our target through the

continued prayers and material support of all those who so love this very special church.

Elizabeth Forrester

Queen Catherine of Aragon's Vestments Restored

Cardinal Pell, Archbishop of Sydney, stayed with us in November. During that visit he wore a chasuble that had not been used for Holy Mass for many years, perhaps over a hundred. At the end of the nineteenth century St Patrick's was given two chasubles that had belonged to the chaplain of the chapel of Queen Catherine of Aragon. Recently we had them restored by the Royal School of Needlework at Hampton Court and they have now been placed in display cabinets in the sacristy here at St. Patrick's.



From the embroidery historians can tell clearly that they belonged to Catherine because of the distinctive pomegranate from her coat of arms. After the dissolution of the monasteries and her death the vestments found their way into the loving and courageous hands of Catholic families. During penal times and the long centuries of persecution the vestments were kept safe from prying eyes who would have cut them up into cushions and curtains.

As the Archdiocese of Sydney very kindly paid for their restoration, it was a great joy to see its Archbishop wear one for the first time. If you would like to view them please ask to see them in the sacristy.





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SPES launched its fourth year with new zeal and many improvements. There was a lot of work going on during the summer to prepare a nice place for the new students on their arrival. With the help of friends and parishioners the school chapel was redecorated and some furniture was added to the classroom. The walls of the old corridor now shine white with colourful posters and there is a new fully fitted carpet.

Maureen Cox is the coordinator of SPES and has been at St. Patrick's for three years. Maureen started this new post at the end of the last academic year, she continues with enthusiasm and with the help of Katarina and Anne Marie, who are former students of the school.

Fr. Francis Selman leads the Catechetical formation as Dean of Academic Studies and this year is joined by Fr Matt Blake OCD as Chaplain to the students in the formation team.



The second year of the "Catholicism for the Curious" talks has started and will continue in the coming months. Well known speakers and topical issues are included in the program. For more information please email or call the Parish Office.

Cardinal George Pell (Archbishop of Sydney) visited St. Patrick's for a week in November. He delivered the opening talk of the weekly series, "Catholicism for the Curious". He shared his thoughts on "Why is our faith curious? What happens after death?" and his experience from the Eucharistic Conference in Rome. His visit ended with a solemn mass celebrated together with the Parish Community on Sunday.



General Information

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Who's Who at St Patrick's
Fr Alexander Sherbrooke (Parish Priest)
Sister Dymrna (Parish Sister)

Mass Times

Monday—Friday: 12.45pm
Saturday Vigil Mass 6pm
Sunday: 11am Parish Mass 5pm Young People's Mass
Holy days of Obligation: 8am, 12.30, 1.05 and 6pm

International Mass Times

Saturday: 4pm Brazilian
Sunday: 2pm Chinese 6pm Latin American

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament:

Monday-Friday 11am-6pm Saturday 7-9pm

Confessions

Monday-Friday: 12.15-12.40pm Saturday: 5.30-6pm