

Voice from the Vicarage 9th March 2023

Dear All,

Well, I'm a little bit cross with myself that in the midst of all the business of the café during the Sydney Road Street Party I didn't get the opportunity to take a few photos to adorn the Voice and so give you a flavour of what was at once a hectic, amusing and fruitful day. Though you have to sell quite a lot of milkshakes or Furphys to make a buck or two, it was fruitful in terms of cash flow, but also as community involvement and in the interesting conversations, not least with numbers of young people, who were scratching their heads and somewhat intrigued about the 'vibe' of 'The Lamb'.

Ecumenical confusion..

I heard from Clare Drew, one of the great crew who assisted on the day. At one point, while she was standing outside the cafe, Clare overheard a woman who apparently saw me through the window scurrying around in my summer white cassock, "Is that the Pope?"

Personally, I've never minded a bit of ecumenical confusion....

It would be foolish to overplay the evangelistic fruitfulness of the day, but at very least we were in the mix, and since I found myself in a few natters and 'selfies' with some young customers, who knows, it might lead to a later conversation or two with their incredulous friends!

Last night, on the other hand, the Lamb felt very different, and possibly a bit more purposeful, as the parish council met.

MAP making

There were of course matters important housekeeping, but the bulk of the time was spent beginning some reflection about a new Mission Action Plan for the parish. It's hard for me to believe that the last MAP was formulated in 2018 to set us some goals and plans until 2021. Covid rather upset matters somewhat after that. A first stage going forward, is some thinking about the marks of a faithful parish community. So we did a little 'brainstorming' about that. There were some good brains around the table with a heart for the further renewal of the parish. Brain and heart. Both are required for such an exercise.

Neither murmuring nor mouldering...in this parish

The greatest challenge, having made a plan, is to not let it moulder in a cupboard becoming little more than 'checkbox' exercise to keep the diocese off our backs. (Every parish is required to have a MAP) A MAP is not written in stone or have the status of the unchanging Word of God, though it should itself be a model of faithfulness to the Scriptures and Tradition. A good MAP gets updated and refined and becomes not the only, but a key litmus test for our perseverance and the health of our life together. There's an old adage : *tell God your plans if you want to give him a laugh*. It's a reminder that sometimes the Spirit will move us in unexpected directions, and we must be open to His surprising touch. But on the other hand we have a God who had his own plan, his 'own appointed time' (Hebrews 1), hidden and then revealed. And he has a plan for us. The very first page of the old MAP says, '**God has a plan for us. Our task to discover and do it..'**

Old maps are interesting....so for your interest I've attached the map we wrote in 2018. Have a look at it. You might like to reflect on how far you think we've come, or we've not come since those days. What's been achieved and what hasn't been? What are the reasons, *some* of which will be good reasons, why some plans have not led to action or change? What should be persevered with? What should go, and what new goals should we be setting ourselves in the context, the post Covid context of our life now. These are surely good questions!



Measures of success?

It's a bit of a trickster to measure success, but it was heartening to note last night that over half the members of our new parish council were *not* members of the parish when we prepared the last one. That's at least a healthy sign in my book.

Meanwhile, daily life and blessings continue...

It was a joy last Saturday to assist Rose and Nathaniel renew their marriage vows. Married almost two years to the day, they had to be wed in Covid fashion, so it was lovely for them to renew their commitment in the presence of God and family and friends. Rose is the daughter of parishioners Rowan Callick and Jan McCallum, and brother to Christian. I gave them 1 Corinthians 13 as their 'go to' text as they keep on. It's a good one...



LAMB B & B @ 6

THIS SUNDAY We will begin to explore the liturgies that will fill and feed us in Holy Week.

NEXT SUNDAY Fr John Stewart assists us as we make the journey from the Ashes of Ash Wednesday to the **Fire** of Pentecost..

And finally, the building of at least part of the decking that will eventually run along the whole of the parish house extension is underway. Deo Gratias! Then the ramp that will allow folk with disabilities easier access to the house will be put in place. Can't come soon enough!



Much love, and hope to see you soon.

+Lindsay