

# Profile of Holy Saviour Parish, Glen Waverley.

August 2009.

Holy Saviour-great parish, great people, great place. Geographically, almost a symmetrical square, Holy Saviour Parish is bounded by the Burvale and the Mountain View hotels, with Springvale Rd east to the green belt of Dandenong Creek forming the borders. The parish sits on 11 acres of land, thanks to the foresight of the 1960's planners and was officially founded in 1974, with Fr Eric Hodgens as its first priest, followed by Fr John Hannon and succeeded by the present PP Fr Gerry McKernan. The Parish has about 1100 families with a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The median age of adults is 42 years which is reflected in the good family attendances at weekend masses.

Holy Saviour is a vibrant community with strong commitment from the laity in all areas of Parish life. The Mission Statement evolved from the consultation of the people led by the Parish Pastoral Council and states: "Our Vision is that our parish leads and supports all members on their journey of faith and our mission is to be a welcoming community that shares a sense of belonging, celebrates our liturgy, nurtures spiritual growth, is open to change and works for social justice." There has been ongoing emphasis on lay involvement, with consultation and collaboration in all dimensions of parish life. In excess of 10 parishioners have theology degrees and there are currently parishioners studying at Y.T.U.

Liturgical celebrations happen as follows: there are three weekend masses- Saturday 6pm, Sunday 9am and 11am. Average attendance is near 550, probably reflecting about 900 coming at least monthly, exponentially escalating 300% at Christmas and Easter!! Morning masses are at 9.10 am from Tuesday to Friday. The school sometimes celebrates their wonderful class liturgies on these occasions. There is a monthly Senior's mass and a quarterly Memorial mass for relatives of deceased parishioners. These are intimate and friendly gatherings. Annually baptisms occur at the rate of 20-25, with a few weddings and some 8-10 funerals. Liturgy is celebrated in a well designed multi-purpose hall, with a permanent chapel able to be partitioned as needed. A new foyer and kitchen/café was added to the church last year which allows for a heightened sense of hospitality. Voluntary rostered teams organise hall cleaning and set up each week. Music is very strong at Holy Saviour with a dedicated choir and about 6 other music groups of terrific standard who make for creative and meaningful liturgies, working hand in hand with a very good liturgy committee. The amazing celebrations of Easter and Christmas are a testament to their great skills.

Parish families have wholeheartedly embraced the family based Sacrament programs which are currently run by two parish Sacramental co-ordinators. Confirmation is for candidates of age 15 with the aim of encouraging ongoing involvement in the Eucharistic community and personal responsibility in regard to a mature choice about Catholic identity. Baptism and Marriage Preparation Teams are run by lay leaders and there is an active Bereavement group. Parishioners are always ready to visit the sick and house bound. There is also a visitation program for the elderly, to address loneliness and isolation. Three retirement villages and Knox Hospital are regularly attended when needed for visitation or liturgy. Holy Saviour is proud of its RCIA team who enthusiastically run the process even when numbers are small.

Affiliated schools are Holy Saviour Primary School and Emmaus Regional College, which is co-educational. The primary school has a very strong relationship with the parish and it shares facilities when necessary. The school has two streams running with 50 or so preps enrolled in 2009. 185 families make up the school population of 298 students. Major renovation was carried out in 2008 with the addition of a new administration area and library as well as some new classrooms, meeting areas and sick bay. The refurbishment continues and the new building grant from the government has seen plans for a new multi-purpose building to be started within the month, offering great facilities for the school and community. There is a Building Committee to handle the new building logistics and a voluntary maintenance co-ordinator looking after repairs and yard management. Emmaus College is attended by 50% of our PS leavers. It runs fairly independently with liturgies occasionally celebrated by the Parish Priest. Avila Girl's College also enjoys similar support and maintains a great relationship with us. The Parish Education Board liaises with the primary school and meets once per month.

Management of the parish is taken care of by the Management Committee. It oversees financial, planning and maintenance issues. There are both parish and school accountants with a strong thanksgiving programme in place. The parish has a very manageable debt with weekly offerings being around \$5,600, 93% being realised on average. A locally run campaign occurs every three years. The Parish employs a strong and capable team of support staff: Pastoral Associate at 24hrs; two Sacramental co-ordinators at 8hrs each; and two secretaries at 35hrs casual. The Management Committee and Pastoral Council oversee about 40 diverse groups, established and revised as needs are identified and arise. For example the Parish Community Group, Youth Group, Third World Interest Group, St Vincent de Paul and the Welcoming Group are just some of these very active groups not to mention God Start, Children's liturgy and playgroup, etc, etc. The biannual Holy Saviour festival is a key community-building event impressively led by a strong committee and enthusiastically supported by the local community. Sporting interests also run under the auspices of the parish including football, netball and tennis.

If you are a team player and a pastoral person who values lay participation you are assured of a very warm welcome. The parish residence is as well built and comfortable as anyone could want. Any inspections or elaborations may be arranged with or elicited from the present incumbent! Overall, Holy Saviour is a happy parish family approaching 36 years of mutual support and co-operation.