



Dear Parishioners,

It will soon be two years since I began my role as your Parish Priest on December 1, 2022. From the start, I've been fully engaged with the team to develop a clear strategy focused on our goal of **"Creating more doorways to the Heart of Jesus."** I'd like to share an update on the various initiatives we've undertaken under each of our three 'doorways'.

REIGNITE THE HEART	BUILD COMMUNITY	DEVELOP SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
Our church is a place of welcome for all who seek peace in Christ.	We offer radical hospitality to those searching for community.	We seek to influence and shape a more just and Christ-like world.
Daily Mass Sacraments Adoration Hour Curious Grace	 	

Central to this work has been the role of the Parish Pastoral Council led by **Brian Anderson** as the Chair and made up of **John Izzo, Barbara France, Daphne O'Brien,** and **Jasper Gotterson.** **Alan Weeks** has also led the Parish Finance Committee is their important work, assisted by **Patrick Furlong** and now the return of **Lynelle Lembryk.**

Parish

The office was moved out of the presbytery to the new open plan **"Hub"** above the Kitchen vacated by the Jesuit Refugee Service during COVID-19. It has been a great success as a new centre for parish works.

We have employed a new Office Secretary and Sacramental Coordinator, **Leeann Gardner,** who is leading the efforts around Church restoration and sacramental activity.



Church Restoration

- Our beautiful Church building has been slowly renovated, as money will allow, to ensure our responsible stewardship of it. Much work needs to be done but we now have a plan in place to see that ongoing work is costed and funds raised for it. The urgent repairs to the organ can now be done. We have also secured the support of **The National Trust** to allow us to begin the process of being able to give tax deductible receipts for donations for the church restoration. This is clearly a huge help.
- The **former confessionals** in the Church, which had become storage areas, were restored back to their original purpose thanks to the generous donation of a parishioner. Confessions are now heard there before the 10 am Sunday Mass.

Curious Grace was introduced and made possible by a team of volunteers ably led by **Sonia Fingleton**. It now operates on the first Sunday of the month as our “drop-in” activities-based event.



Mass and Sacraments

- Our music ministry, led by **Claudine Walker**, has gone from strength to strength with the re-introduction of the Parish Choir along with soloists and more musicians at the 10 am Sunday Mass.
- The number of those **attending our Masses** has almost tripled over the past two years and the weekly collections now allow for the costs of two priests' stipends to be covered, at least since the beginning of this financial year. This has made our parish more financially sustainable.
- The number of **weddings** booked in our Church in 2025 is on track to be sevenfold on those performed in 2022.
- A team of young acolytes and altar servers have been enlisted to add to the reverence of our Sunday Masses.
- **First Friday Adoration** before the Blessed Sacrament was begun and has grown steadily in attendance.
- **A Parish Immersion** to Cambodia and a Camino Pilgrimage have been introduced with more planned for 2025. These open our parish up to the worldwide mission of the Church, especially the Society of Jesus.
- **Father Arturo Sosa, SJ, the Father General of the Society of Jesus** visited St Canice's in April which was a great honour for us all.
- Lastly, and far from least, our parish **Rosary Group** has grown in numbers and has been ardently seeking Mary's guidance for our parish most mornings before Mass.



Community

St Canice's Kitchen came under new management with **Greg Chapple**, the former VP of Oracle Financial Services for Asia, the Middle East and Africa. He has managed to transform the finances and drive efficiencies with improved outcomes for our guests. He is ably assisted by a great team, including **Ollie Mulhearn** who manages our 400+ volunteers.



- Recently, our Kitchen has employed **Kim Clarke** as the new **Fundraising, Grants, and Partnerships Manager** to execute a strategy to meet the growing needs of the Kitchen. Kim comes with years of experience as a lead fundraiser at St. Ignatius' College, Riverview.
- Revived **engagement with schools** St Vincents, Riverview, Aloys, and Waverley understanding the plight of homelessness, sleepout fundraising activities, and students assisting in food preparation ahead of daily lunch service. Also, we had the pleasure of having Riverview Year 11 students assist in Sunday lunch service on the Feast of Ignatius.
- We continue to expand the surrounding **services to support** our guests including engagement of Counsellors and Social Workers (including 2 Social Work students) so we now have expanded support for our guests 5 days a week.

- We have created a **Kitchen Advisory Group** comprising of parishioners, volunteers, and business and industry experts to provide advice and guidance to the kitchen management team. Doing so we seek to expand services to our guests, redevelop the kitchen, and drive fundraising activities necessary to support the kitchen activities and growth.
- We have secured new donors for the Kitchen including Woolworths, Aldi, Baker Bleu (Neil Perry's bakery at Double Bay)



973

Free meals provided each week



800

Amenity Packs & **60** showers a week



1200

Items of clothing provided annually



12

Clients helped weekly by social workers



David's Place has moved to better premises in the presbytery where the old office used to be. They now regularly use the presbytery backyard for meetings and recreation where a new outdoor kitchenette was installed for that purpose. David's Place were also taken by me on a four-day retreat to a beach house at Gerroa with another planned for this December.

Our parish's commitment to **Our Lady of Fatima in Railaco, East Timor** has been on display with the most successful year of fundraising so far thanks to the generosity of so many old and new parishioners alike.

Thanks to the support of St Canice's Parish and leadership from **Michael Musgrave** from January to June 2024:

- **675 people have directly benefited** from the feeding program and NOSSEF school support.
- **319 children received nutritious meals** three times weekly through the feeding program.
- 73% of boys and 42% of girls whose weight is being tracked, have **gained two (2) kgs** of weight during the first three months of 2024 decreasing their risk of malnutrition.
- **339 Students at NOSSEF gained a quality education** in a range of subjects due to the employment of qualified teachers.
- **100% of NOSSEF students completed their first quarter exams.**
- 48% of NOSSEF's 2023 graduates were accepted to study at Timor Loro-sa'e National University (UNTL). This is the **highest-ever acceptance rate** of NOSSEF graduates.
- 10 students are studying at Instituto de São João de Brito (ISJB) a Jesuit teacher education college.
- Many NOSSEFF students received the **Sacrament of Confirmation** at Mass on 8 June, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.
- **17 Local teachers** have gained income and employment in their local community to the benefit of themselves and their families.



Social Enterprise

The parish now hosts a new charity called **Colombière Social Enterprises**, run for and by young adults to support small social enterprises both here and overseas, now set up with tax-deductible status and a board.



Some of their projects are:

- Supporting a farming co-op in **Northern Thailand** for Karen and Hmong tribal people.
- Supporting with young medical volunteers the work of **Hayden Hall in Darjeeling**, India, which is a Jesuit initiative, and possibly **Timor Leste** as well.
- Our parish immersion to **Cambodia** has sparked opportunities there too for Colombière to work with older parishioner mentors supporting them.
- Working with the Kitchen to develop ways to shift it to a social enterprise framework.
- I was blessed to lead all up some eighteen young adults for short one- week visits to East Timor, Vietnam and India to learn from social enterprises on the ground there within the Jesuit network.
- The first Colombière social event was attended by 50+ young adults on our office rooftop.
- Last Sunday about 18 university students came to hear about possible short immersions being planned for 2025 to India, Thailand and East Timor.
- Finally, **Colombière House** is our new name for a building onsite that was producing no rental income when I arrived, but which is now home to a community of 8 young adults, who are all volunteering in our parish and paying market rent.

St Canice's Op Shop

Colombière Social Enterprises is also supporting our own Clothing Op Shop with developing a business plan and young volunteers to support the current team. These enthusiastic young people are being carefully mentored by the "old guard" who have run the Op Shop so successfully and for so long.



Final Word

All of this work would not be possible without the support of our army of volunteers, of whom there are too many to name.

However, there is one name I must mention. **Oscar Dean** is a young man who came to work here "between jobs" and stayed for 18 months because he fell in love with all that we do here. He is now moving back into the corporate world, and I know that I will personally miss his extraordinary gifts, energy, and compassion. I wish him all the best and every blessing on your behalf.

I am delighted by everything we've accomplished together in such a short period. Although our team is small, it's expanding to help us roll out even more initiatives and foster a thriving Parish at St. Canice's.

This Sunday I am heading off to lead the Parish Ignatian Camino in Northern Spain where 12 of you will walk (and drive) in the footsteps of Saint Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. Please pray for our pilgrimage group and we'll be praying for the whole parish too as we visit the holy sites. And please give a warm welcome to those visiting priests who will be helping Fr Dave Ryan out at the Sunday Masses while I am away.

In the meantime, I entrust our parish and all of its works to Mary, the Mother of God and Queen of Peace that we might have her gentle and compassionate heart for the poor that leads us to her Son.

In the Lord, *Janet Brattin* ST