

## **RECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT - Parish Annual Meeting 2008**

Something interesting happened to our parish this year. In the Episcopal Church there are 5 categories of parishes, based on Average Sunday Attendance. 5 years ago All Saints' was in the lowest category, called *Family*. In my 1<sup>st</sup> year as Rector we moved into the category termed *Pastoral*. Most Episcopal parishes fall in either of these 2 categories. This year we have moved into the category called *Transitional*. The ASA range for this is 140-225. For your information the remaining 2 categories are *Program* (225-400) and *Resource* (400+). I want you to know I have no desire for us to enter into either of these categories, for then the personal relationship between priest and people - which is such a feature of our parish - would be lost.

This jump will come as no surprise to us. For several years now we have seen our congregation grow, activities increase, and new people join our parish. In some cases older parishioners might be threatened by this – but not so at All Saints'. Quite the reverse! When I came to the parish it was made quite clear to me that you wanted to grow. Now your prayers and hard work have borne fruit.

### **STATISTICS**

A glance at the statistics for 2007 will confirm my observations. Those of you who attended Midnight Mass experienced a packed church. It was the best attended Service since I became Rector. More significantly, the total acts of communion at our Christmas Services = 264 – an increase of 62 on last year. This is a phenomenal increase in just 12 months

Other Services during the year also encouraged us. As well as baptisms the Sacrament of Confirmation was administered to 7 adults last January, and there were 3 parish weddings. It has been several years since we have had these numbers. To the surprise of many, it is our Sunday 8.00 am Mass that continues to grow. Recently there were more people at 8 am than at 10 am. This, of course, had nothing to do with the fact that the Chargers were playing at 10 am!

Not only have attendances continued to grow, but also our finances. Last year I challenged you to meet a balanced budget. For the first time in many years, we did. Now we are looking at a similar budget – and instead of hoping you will meet the challenge, you already have! Our stewardship appeal has resulted in pledges totaling over \$230,000 - an increase of 15%.

## PARISH STRENGTHS

Why has there been such growth in our parish? There are 3 particular reasons, I believe.

### 1. Our Anglocatholic tradition.

At All Saints' the catholic faith is preached and taught, and expressed in our worship. This makes us different to other parishes – and we wouldn't want it any other way. The bible is our foundation, along with the unbroken teaching of the church, and this makes for a significant and inspiring community of faith.

### 2. The worship.

To experience the Eucharist at All Saints' is a window into heaven. Again, we are different to most other churches. The Eucharist is offered with reverence and devotion, and the great traditions of the Catholic Church. And this is because we know Jesus is present in the Mass, and it is him we proclaim and worship. When we come to Mass we are not looking inwards at our needs, nor engaging in a radical agenda to change the church or the world. These may result from it – but our eyes are on Jesus as the object of our faith, and not just as the example of faith.

### 3. Our community.

The third reason I suggest is that All Saints' is a friendly church. Catholic teaching and inspiring worship need to be accompanied by an accepting and friendly community. There is a place for everyone at All Saints'. We have experienced it ourselves, and we see it as we look around on Sundays. Again I pay tribute to the older members of this congregation, going back to Fr Satrang's time. I hesitate to use the word inclusive because in the Episcopal Church this now means even atheists can receive Holy Communion! We Anglocatholics know that the sacraments are means of grace, not magic charms to make us feel better. And we know that the church is the body of Christ, not just another club for people who like that sort of thing!

## PROJECTS

Last year we undertook some significant projects. Our Pre-school was firmly established under a committee headed by Mrs Sheila Hilliard, and has made excellent progress. It is now contributing to parish finances, along with other tenants using the former school buildings.

The income from our properties has been deposited into a special account. This has allowed us to build up a fund for maintenance and significant work on our properties. So last year we were able to repaint the school buildings – long overdue. The Vestry now has a fund which will enable significant work to be done on our properties, and the facilities committee can now plan major works previously beyond our resources. I would particularly like to mention the new lighting in the sanctuary, paid for as a memorial to Frances Chamberlain. What a transformation this has been. As I commented at the time - the priests and choir who previously walked in darkness have now seen a great light!

### PERSONEL

The Outreach Committee under the leadership of Kim Evans initiated new outreach and publicity during the year. 2 new things were the Newcomers Dinner and the welcome packs. This committee has an important role to play, and is another reason for our growth in people and fellowship. Other committees have done equally important ministries. A fantastic garden party was organized by our fund-raising committee, and the chair of that committee, Cheryl Evans, repainted and renovated the Fireside Room virtually single-handed.

The most obvious improvement has been in our Sunday publications. I hesitate to call them bulletins, because they are almost works of art! For this we have to thank our new Parish Administrator, Terry. Bringing him from England was almost as big a step in faith as bringing your Rector from Australia! But what a great change it has been. He has brought youthful enthusiasm, talent and professionalism to every aspect of the parish office. We trust that he will be with us for some time, if only so that we can continue to enjoy his accent! And as I express my appreciation I would like to also pay tribute to George Garrison and Charles Randall, who both retired last year after many years of assisting with the administration and office.

### MUSIC

Another challenge 12 months ago concerned the music ministry of the parish, and this has been another wonderful success. Parishioners responded to the appeal for the music fund, and we were able to engage 4 paid section leaders in the choir. The standard and quality of the music has increased as a result, enhancing our worship and giving us real pleasure. I would to thank Mr Robert MacLeod, and all the members of the choir. Bob has even more enthusiasm, and we are the beneficiaries.

I would like to make particular mention of the High Mass on Ascension Day to mark my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. What a wonderful Mass it was, thanks to the superb music.

Our worship is more than High Mass and music. It is the center of our life as a community. Everything we do finds its focus and purpose at the altar. I pay tribute to all the acolytes, to Norma Dreyer and the altar guild, to Laura Shell and the flower guild, and to all those who help in so many ways: readers, sidesmen, greeters, coffee hour hosts, etc. There is also Ralph Gordon, our Sunday Sexton, and Homero Zapata, our full-time Sexton. Thank you everyone.

### PERSONAL THANKS

There are many people I would like to thank personally. Firstly to Fr Krulak, my ever-obliging assistant. To the other associate priests, Fathers Edwards, Thrumston & Barta - thank you also.

The Wardens, Vestry, Treasurer and Secretary have all worked hard for the parish, and never lose their sense of humor! Thank you for what you have given this year. Thank you also to Jim Mickelson, our business manager, who I rely on for much of what happens in the day-to-day administration of the parish.

Finally 2 things beyond our parish, but for its benefit:

*Pilgrimage* Last August 12 parishioners went on pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in England. This was a wonderful experience for us all. It will also have an ongoing spiritual benefit for the parish - not least because All Saints' is now very much a part of that holy place, and its ongoing life of prayer and healing.

*Sabbatical* According to diocesan regulations I am due for sabbatical leave. After consultation with the Bishop and the Vestry, it has been arranged that I will have 5 weeks sabbatical this summer. I will be spending the month of August in Sicily as chaplain of St George's Anglican Church, Taormina. This will be a time for me to reflect on my ministry, do some good reading and reflection and take things at a slower pace. I am looking forward to this, knowing that whilst I am away you will be ably served by Fathers Krulak and Edwards. And, of course, that I will not be far from your thoughts and prayers.

### FAITHFUL DEPARTED

I conclude by paying tribute to 3 parishioners who died during the year, all of whom had long connections with the parish:

Betty Williams, Mae Wiley and James Fallon.

*Rest eternal grant to them O Lord: And let light perpetual shine upon them.*