Spirituality
Parish Mission:
This Ignatian Retreat Style Mission was conducted in the parish over 5 weeks: 28 May – 25 June. An average of 40 parishioners entered over the 5 week period. The Outreach Team from Campion Ignatian Centre of Spirituality led the mission and the feedback received was largely very positive. A small number of people were concerned that the style of the Mission was not what was envisaged – that is the traditional understanding of parish mission, but the opportunity for deepening relationship with God, developing new ways for an ongoing prayer life and strengthening community though the sharing of prayer was experienced as a grace for individuals. I believe the effects of this Mission continue to flow into the parish, having an impact on leadership and service and into the wider community as well. Some participants of the Mission now undertake or are considering undertaking spiritual direction. An Ignatian prayer group has developed following the retreat and the feedback in the evaluation conducted was that those who participated desire further such opportunities.

Reflection Days:
Along with Fr Steven, I have conducted two reflection days for parishioners. Usually this sort of day appeals to parishioners who are already on a deliberate journey, seeking to encounter God in a personal way. I have also endeavoured to encourage others, including school parents who are not usually part of our worshipping community, to come along, but have come to the conclusion that different ways need to be found to nurture people’s spirituality.

Of course, as well as Ignatian spirituality, there are other pathways to living in and seeking to deepen relationship with God. Recently, we invited Peter Kearney to share through his music and gift of story-telling, of the life of St Francis of Assisi. Around 70 people gathered for this night, including people from other Christian churches in the area.

Fr Steven and I have also facilitated reflection days for the Faith Development Team, which has the responsibility of overseeing and facilitating faith development in the area of sacrament. The focus of these reflection days has been the sacramentality of Creation. And more recently in that regard recovering the Catholic imagination.

Prep Parent Nights:
Each year since 2005, we have conducted a night for Prep Parents which seek to nurture spirituality. These nights have been very successful with feedback from parents overwhelmingly positive in each of the areas we aim to cover. As well as bringing these parents experience of life in the love of this particular child into the realm of their relationship with God, I had become aware through my pastoral visitation of new prep parents, that it takes some time for some new parents to feel connected with others. This can result in feelings of isolation. Another very important aim of this night is to give parents an experience of the wider parish. For many school parents the only part of the parish they relate to is the school. This night is designed to broaden their experience, so that they come to see that the school is not the parish, but is one part of the parish which welcomes and loves them. It is an opportunity for parents to see other aspects of the parish alive and engaging.

Spiritual Direction:
In the last year I have also provided spiritual direction for a small number of parishioners.

Formation
I have already mentioned my contribution to the Faith Development Team, and as well as that input into the Team, along with other members of that Team I provide some input on the Faith Formation nights for families of children preparing for sacraments.

As a member of that Team, the position I come from is more about the spirituality which sacraments embrace and call forth in us. This spirituality which is grounded in our Catholic theology of nature and grace. I think that as a Team we offer an integrated approach, which provides a solid theology, spirituality and evidence of the sacramental life embedded in the Eucharist.

RCIC:
This year, we have been in transition with our Rite of Christian Initiation of Children process. Therefore our RCIC Team has had a bit of a rest and as we only had one young man preparing for the sacraments under through the RCIC I took him on this journey myself. You would have seen Joe Primerano receiving his sacraments if you attended the Easter Vigil this year.

In this transition time for the RCIC, I have been meeting with two pastoral associates in neighbouring parishes. Together with our parish priests we are developing a way forward in which we will share resources across these 3 parishes. We are developing a training program and means of supporting team members along the way.

Parish Pastoral Council:
Fr Steven asked me some years ago to assist the PPC in its formation. I do this in collaboration with Fr Steven, by providing material for reading and discussion in relation to the future of the church, encouraging people to imagine what might need to happen in what will inevitably be a different looking structure of parish in the future. My role in this ongoing formation is informed by the outcome of the 2000 Parish Review and the constitution of the PPC, which outlines the guidelines under which the PPC strives to operate.

One vital guideline for the PPC is to encourage, nurture and enable the gifts of all parishioners in the mission of the parish. This is not always an easy outcome to achieve. At times it seems more natural to attend to tasks, rather than call forth and enable others in ministry. Collaborative ministry is an ideal to which we must all aspire. Together with Fr Steve I facilitated a weekend for the PPC on collaborative ministry.

Together with other PPC members I have also been involved in the deanery project Imagining Future Parishes – at parish level in discussion with a small group from PPC and at deanery level when required.

Liturgy of the Word:
One evident outcome of the diminishing number of priests in Australia is the increased need to parishioners to take seriously the call of Vatican 11 to the ministry of all the baptised.

In recent years we have seen the formation of a Team to lead Liturgy of the Word on a Monday when Fr Steve is away, when Fr Steven is on leave and also during the second semester of the academic year, when Fr Steven is called upon to lecture at CTC. These Liturgy of the Word services have developed into a life giving experience for those who attend and also those who lead. An appreciation of the dynamic nature of the Word and a surprising hunger for the Eucharist is the result.

I have been working with the leaders of this Team and together we are shaping the way together. It is a collaborative ministry as we not only discern the way forward for the Team, but call others to be involved in these liturgies. It is a Spirit filled ministry. The fruits are evident.

Liturgical Formation:
I am involved in the Deanery initiative Powerful Points which provides formation for liturgical ministry to people across deanery parishes. In particular I collaborate with Trevor Corcoran to provide the training - Lay Leaders of Liturgy.

At times I am also involved in the Powerful Points formation for other liturgical ministries.
Funeral Ministry:
As with Liturgy of the Word, we are finding that there is an increasing need for non-
ordained people to lead funerals. This year I have been involved – again with the pastoral
associates in neighbouring parishes, in developing a training program for funeral ministry.
We now have a number of people, who are also (importantly) involved leading Liturgy of the
Word, who are preparing to lead funeral services and rites of committal at the cemetery or
crematorium. Some members of our Vigil Group have also been trained in this ministry, but
have refined their ministry to the Vigil. Ultimately this initiative if funeral ministry will
enable a team approach with those who lead vigils, funeral services in the church or chapel
and at the cemetery.

E-conferences:
Last year I collaborated with a neighbouring PA to facilitate the national e-conference on
Luke. This was held at St Francis Xavier parish Montmorency. On May 18 this year, a similar
national e-conference will be conducted on Mary and this will be held here at St Mary's

Pastoral Outreach:
My visitation of prep parents at times opens possibilities for me to provide some ongoing
support for people. I also visit other parishioners in need of support.

Youth:
I have been involved in working with a small group of young people in the parish trying to
find ways to care for people living with mental illness. This is not always an easy ministry to
be involved with. What we have done though is to conduct a workshop for children and
teenagers between years 5 and 8 on cyber bullying. This was an initiative which not only
provided great tools for young people, but it also gave the team members great
opportunities to develop skills with the support from Maryanne Pannucci a parent from the
school who is a registered psychologist and lecturer in youth work and psychology at VUT,

Ministries
Supporting Existing Ministries:
Part of my role is to support people in the various ministries in the parish. I am not always
able to provide the support required for various reasons. Time is an issue for me and also
the openness of people to receiving support and the actual need. For people who manage
quite well, perhaps there is not seen to be a need for support. As an example, Deloraine
Nursing Home is one place we take communion to the Sick and it has been a great pleasure
for me to work with two parishioners in developing a wonderful ministry there, which not
only nourished the souls of the residents, but also the staff and the ministries themselves. A
great example of people’s gifts being used for God’s work. The blossoming of that ministry is evident.

Initiating Ministries - example:
You may have become aware of the Prayer Shawl Ministry which began last year. This is a blessing for the parish as many people have been involved in knitting prayer shawls for people in need. 50 shawls were knitted by the time of the parish Mass of Anointing of the Sick at the end of last year. This ministry continues.

General Observations:
What I am seeing more clearly now is that ministries will flourish if they are the work of the Spirit. Sometimes ministries struggle and these are time for serious review. I also know that when a ministry depends on someone like a profession – like a pastoral associate, to coordinate or be constantly present, it is not likely to flourish. The workings of the Spirit are through the gifts of people who use them freely, who have a certain confidence in God’s presence with them and who are open to listen to where the Spirit is calling them in that ministry.

Pastoral Associates:
Local networking, Northern Region, Association, Employment Relations Group.

I am committed to collaborative ministry with other PAs, whether this be on a local or Archdiocesan level. As I have mentioned previously it is important to be aware of where the Spirit is inviting you to participate. At an Archdiocesan level I am involved in the area of Employment Relations. In the past year I have been involved in intense negotiations and work for just employment conditions for PAs. This has not only been with our own Archdiocese but the Australian Bishop’s Commission and the Industrial Relations Commission. This may not seem to be relevant to parish work, but I mention it because it is very important that we see beyond the parish, have an appreciation of important issues of justice and that each of us gives way to committing to the work of the Spirit beyond the local parish.

Thank you for all the support you have given me.