St. Mary's Parish
Annual General Meeting
Parish Pastoral Council Report

It has been a privilege to chair the St. Mary's Parish Pastoral Council this year and work with Father Steve, Jacinta Bright and 11 dedicated Parishioners: Vice Chairperson: Sam Giudice, Glenda Tombs, Michelle D'Souza, Judy Newell, Eunice Olsen, Chris Fernandez, John Dwyer, Graeme Bryce, John Mc Entee, George Rizzi, Secretary- Jo Guidice. The last 12 months has seen major changes to the Church, School and the council itself and the following is an overview of what we have endeavoured to do-

- Parishioners have been encouraged to attend the Parish Working Bees via the Church Notices and signs around the Church in the week prior. This is in response to the numbers of school families far outweighing the number of parishioners who attend and the desire by the PPC to have both the school community and parish community seen as one community.
- In order to bring the community of Parish and school together, a special Mass was organized away from the Church during its renovations. The normal 10am Sunday Mass was held at Loyola College on 28 November. The original idea was to have an outside Mass/Picnic due to the success of a previous Community outdoor Mass, but there was a concern the weather would be unsuitable and so the Mass was held in the Loyola school hall. A BBQ/morning tea, raffle, games for the children and music provided by Allyson Tombs was held after the Mass and well supported by the Parishioners. It was deemed a successful morning. This Mass would not have been possible without the input and support of the Liturgy team, Musicians, Maintenance Committee and many other Parishioners who were generous in their offers of help where needed.
- Mass goers at various Masses were greeted by some of our PPC members and handed the Parish newsletter at one or two of the Church entrances.
- When newcomers to the Parish attend their first Mass they are invited to fill out a card with their details for our records. Members then collect these cards and arrange the following: they are sent a welcome letter, a parish support program flyer and an invitation to be involved in Parish life. In some cases direct contact is made and advice given re the transition to this area and anything else required.
- A few members attended the night for Prep parents and assisted in meeting and working with the new school parents. This worthwhile night is always popular and PPC members appreciate the opportunity to mix with parents they would otherwise never meet.
- We were kept informed of what is happening at the Deanery level by a member
who attends the meetings and reports back.

- A fundraising committee has been set up to fund our commitment to the loans undertaken for the Church Gathering Space and allied works. This group is being led by David Marshall and the first fundraising event has been organized and is currently being promoted. It is hoped that individual donations will cover the costs of furnishing and fitting out the interior of the gathering space and all the incidentals.

- A formation weekend for the council was held at Palotti, Millgrove on 13/14 February. 12 out of 14 members were able to attend. Topics discussed included:
  - Readiness for collaborative ministry
  - How to be leaders
  - The profile of the PPC
This was a wonderful opportunity for the councilors to get to know each other better and to reflect on their role as leaders of the Parish. We were very grateful for this opportunity and thank Father Steve and Jacinta for facilitating these few days for us.

- A Cyber-bullying evening was held for 11-15 year olds on 18 March. Students from St. Mary's, Loyola and Greensborough North were invited. It was very well received by the young people and there are plans for more events in this vein.

- Discussions and reading regarding 'Imagining Future Parishes' within the Diamond Valley Deanery was a major focus in the latter half of 2009. Topics such as what would we do if we did not have our own Parish Priest and How would we share our clergy with other nearby parishes. This was thought provoking and generated many ideas.

- The PPC was kept informed on the ongoing process of deciding on a new St. Mary's Emblem Design.

- Councillors have attended seminars outside the Parish and have reported back to the PPC.

- The PPC is in the process of updating the Parish Information Booklet whereby all parish groups will be listed and information provided to encourage new members.

- The role of Sacristan at 5pm was discussed and is now shared by PPC members to alleviate the burden on one or two people.

- PPC members attended the Greensborough Inter Church Annual Dinner.

What lies ahead -

- When the gathering space is completed, the PPC like many other groups is keen to use and promote it amongst the Church community.

- The Council will look at guidelines for the new gathering space; what is it to be used for and what will the criteria for use be. We feel that it is important to reserve the dignity of the area and restrict it from being seen as another multi
purpose room.
- The PPC would like to organize an opportunity for school families to visit the new gathering space and thus allow them to feel part of the Parish.
- The PPC would also like to organize an opportunity for parishioners to visit the new school buildings when they are completed and the road works are finished. Again this is seen as an opportunity for school parents to see the connection between school and parish.
- There is a continuing desire to work with and find opportunities to engage the youth of the Parish. We are grateful for the efforts of those who have shown interest in this area.
- The PPC is looking at how things will change when the Parish and School Offices are amalgamated. The idea of a combined newsletter has been suggested.

For the Parish Pastoral Council there is much to look forward to in the coming months as the Gathering space takes shape, the school buildings are completed and the councillors decide how best to contribute their talents and gifts for the good of St. Mary's parish.

Maureen Lonsdale
May 2010