

ST PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL  
SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, 27 NOVEMBER 2024

PARISH PRIEST'S REPORT

Since my last report in August, we have continued our regular School Masses with Mass on 27 August at the time of Father's Day celebrations; and 29 October.

On Friday 30 August we had a joyful celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, with Bishop Tony Ireland conferring the Sacrament on Grade Six candidates, along with several children from our Parish Catechetics class.

As standardly happens every 25 years, Pope Francis has proclaimed 2025 as a Jubilee Year for the whole Church. One of the ways in which Archbishop Comensoli is marking this occasion for the Archdiocese of Melbourne is to invite parishes and schools to celebrate Confirmation at St Patrick's Cathedral next year if possible, so we are pleased to be able to take up this offer.

On Tuesday 29 October we celebrated First Reconciliation for children in Grade 2. In preparation for receiving this sacrament for the first time, the children and their families attended a 'Commitment' Mass at the Parish Vigil Mass on Saturday 25 October. People sometimes wonder at the age at which this sacrament is first received. Having First Reconciliation at this age is intended as an initiation into a lifelong experience of receiving God's healing grace and mercy. In view of this, we keep offering students in Grades Three to Six the opportunity for receiving the sacrament a couple of times a year, so that they can become increasingly accustomed to it.

Thank you for the feedback received from the August meeting about Sunday Mass attendance, which Ben Quirin passed on to me at a fruitful meeting on 3 September. We discussed different ways in which celebrations of weekend Mass could be adapted to better attract families, in view of competing commitments from such things as weekend sport – for example, the possibility of a Mass specifically geared towards families. We intend to develop our ideas on this, and to put them into practice in 2025.

We look forward to our end-of-year School Mass on 3 December, and to a joyful celebration of Christmas. I pay tribute to the excellent work and commitment of our outgoing Religious Education Leader, India Mitchell-Fletcher, as she departs St Patrick's, and I look forward to working with Kathryn Ady in this role in 2025. I also pay tribute to Ann Earle on her retirement, especially in view of her wonderful contribution to music at School Masses over her years at St Patrick's. She has organised a Children's Choir for the upcoming Christmas Eve 6:00 Vigil Mass; as of 19 November, 65 children had volunteered, and no doubt the number has grown since then – so we look forward to a great celebration.