

2024 PARISH FORUM

Some 35 parishioners attended the St Carthage's Parish Forum, held at St Carthage's on Friday 27 September 11.00am-1.00pm, and led by Fr Tony Kerin. The theme was **Intentional Discipleship**. Its major purpose was to offer a chance to share with and listen to the experiences and stories of other parishioners. After an 'ice-breaking' session of each person getting to know someone not known to them, Fr Tony presented an overview of what is involved in the call to discipleship and creating communities able to share the Gospel, as well as mentioning the practical challenges currently facing catholic parishes. He argued that catholics had to move beyond simple knowledge to genuine experience of their faith. He shared some of his own experiences about the positive and sometimes unexpected fruits of collective prayer. Each group considered what they liked most about the parish, and what they liked the least, and what we could do if we had the relevant resources. Our major focus was on the story of the disciples walking away from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) and then meeting Jesus through the breaking of the bread. Fr Tony introduced the practice of Spiritual Conversation, a method used during Synodality discussions both in Rome and Australia. This involves each person in a small group sharing the fruits of their prayer, then each person reporting to their group what they heard from others, concluding with a free conversation about the insights that had been gained. There was recognition that the Holy Spirit spoke through many voices, and that the challenge was to bring these voices together in a positive way. The next stage was to review the draft Strategic Plan which has been circulated, and to involve more people in activities within the parish.

The Forum concluded with an ample shared lunch in the Parish House, provided by parishioners.

The parish is keen to enlarge the group of people involved in one or other aspect of our three core goals: being a welcoming and caring community, providing an inclusive and inspiring liturgy, commitment to social justice and Gospel values. If you are interested in assisting in hospitality or other activities, social or educational within the parish, contact the chair of the Pastoral Council, Constant.Mews@monash.edu If you are willing to help occasionally in setting up the church for Saturday 6pm mass contact Mary Galea <m.galea@unimelb.edu.au> or for Sunday 10am mass Maree Rabach <maree.rabach@bigpond.com> .