



# St Mary's Parish

Incorporating the Catholic communities of Hamilton,  
Dunkeld, Macarthur, Glenthompson and Peshurst.

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## Dear Parishioners

I ask that you prayerfully contemplate the information provided in this letter and, over coming weeks, are able to assist us in discerning the way forward for our parish. Together we face a number of challenges into 2015 including; mass schedules, pastoral care, faith formation and ministering to our school families.

## Priest Availability

Fr John Corrigan – Is providing pastoral care to the Casterton, Coleraine, Edenhope, Balmoral and Harrow parishes and is no longer available to the Hamilton parish.

Fr Felise – Has returned to Samoa.

Fr Paddy Mugavin – Will be the sole priest responsible for the parish.

Fr Paddy is the canonical administrator of five catholic schools in the district and acting as mentor to two priests.

The number of aged priests in the diocese nearing retirement means that the call on younger priests to take on larger parishes will create larger ministry districts for the existing priests. This means that our parish priest will have to cover a much larger area, taking in the likes of Portland, Heywood, Coleraine, Casterton, etc. This is not just a possibility, but a reality. These changes could be quite rapid.

## Rebuilt

The Parish is committed to implementing a number of changes in focus, as per the "Rebuilt" experience. We invite all parishioners to join in the conversation and commitment to new ways of being church by attending the many "Rebuilt" opportunities available.

## Changes to the Mass Schedule

There will be changes to the weekly Mass schedule commencing early in 2015. This will be done in consultation with our parishioners over the coming weeks. With the reduced number of priests available, it is not possible for the existing Mass schedule to be offered. Parishioners will need to be open and prepared for changes which are for the good of the whole parish but are also a necessity. One possibility is that we move the 10:30am Sunday Mass to 11:00am to allow the country centres to retain their 9am services. We invite you to contribute to the planning conversations when they arise in coming weeks.

## Changes to Parish Staffing

Changes to our society over the last couple of decades means it is much more challenging to enlist the help of volunteers. The parish of the future will therefore rely on paid employees to do much of the work previously performed by volunteers. Employing staff is a necessary way to ensure that the levels of pastoral care and faith formation are maintained or enhanced. Without paid employees, the pressures on our parish priest will be far greater than he can manage and will also mean reduced care for our parishioners. In 2015 the parish intends to appoint suitable lay people into part-time positions in pastoral care co-ordination and faith formation. The parish is in a fortunate position to be able to fund these positions thanks to income from investments obtained in the form of bequests from past parishioners.

### **Sunday Evening Mass**

The Sunday evening Mass will be re-introduced in a format that is family friendly. While some parishioners may not be attracted to this time-slot, the parish is committed to reaching out to our school families with this Mass.

### **School Family Dinners**

The parish will be looking to expand our very successful school family Friday night dinners in 2015. We will be calling on parishioner to assist Fr Paddy play host to the families on these nights. This will entail being a friend to our school families on the night.

### **Wednesday Meet Up**

In 2014 the parish commenced what we called "Wednesday Meet Up". The parish hosts a morning tea and chat for a couple of hours on a Wednesday morning. This is a great way of reaching out to our community, especially young mums. Again support from parishioners will be sought in 2015.

### **Stewardship**

The last three years has seen a reduction of pledged stewardship of 27%. This is a direct result of parishioners dying or leaving the parish. A renewal program will be held late in 2015 in which we will request a new commitment to your parish.

### **Weekday Masses**

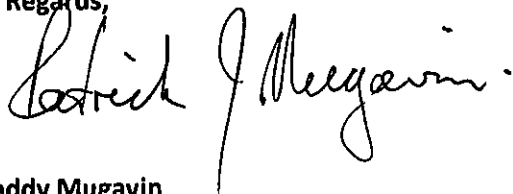
It will not be possible to provide as many weekday masses as there currently are. There will be a strong focus on school masses for both St Mary's Hamilton and St Joseph's Penshurst. Previously Fr John Corrigan has been ministering to St Joseph's Penshurst.

These words from Pope Francis give us hope for our Parish into the future;

**"The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community."**

**Pope Francis – The Joy of the Gospel 2013**

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paddy J. Mugavin'.

**Fr Paddy Mugavin**

**Parish Priest**