

<http://citycentrechurchesnetwork.blogspot.com.au/2017/07/paul-hachey-sm-my-life-took-quite-a-shift.html>

‘My life took quite a shift!’

**Paul Hachey SM**



As an American Marist Priest, I spent most of the last 25-years working as a canon lawyer, usually with marriage annulments, dispensations from the priesthood and allegations of sexual misconduct against priests.

My life took quite a shift when I became part of the team at St. Patrick's in downtown Sydney. Now my focus is on the Eucharist, Reconciliation, Baptism, and Marriage. Thankfully, the parish team is supportive and forgiving as I continue to learn St. Patrick's policies and procedures.



All in all, it has been an exceptionally fine 1<sup>st</sup> year on the parish team which consisted of 3 Marist Priests from the Province of Australia, along with another Marist Priest either from the Province of Oceania or the Province of New Zealand. Additionally, it has been a pleasure to come to know other Marists from the Province of Australia who willingly take time out of their other duties to give a few hours per week to minister at St. Patrick's.

### **A Spiritual Haven**



St. Patrick's Church is a spiritual haven that welcomes all. At any of the 11-Sunday Masses or any of the 5-daily weekday Masses there are:

- tourists from around the world
- people who are registered in their neighborhood parish but consider St. Patrick's their second parish because they work in downtown Sydney and attend Eucharist, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and when needed attend our monthly Sacrament of the Sick service.
- and people who refer to St. Patrick's as their parish.

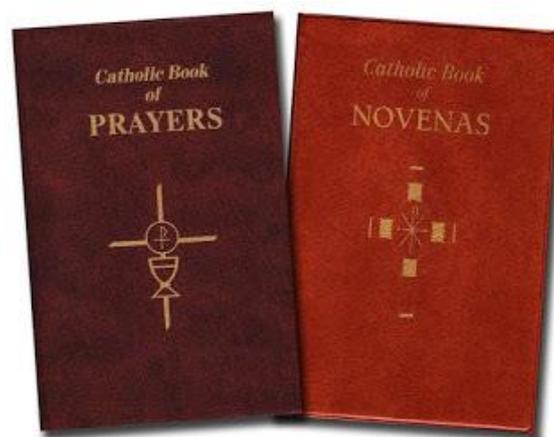
### **Welcoming**

There has been an increase in the number of parents bringing their young children to one of the 11-Sunday Masses. We do not have a sound-proof special area for parents to sit with their young children. Hence, I asked a few parents what attracted them to attend Sunday masses at St. Patrick's. Without exception, the parents said the parishioners made them and their young children feel welcome.

### **Food for the Soul**

Those seeking spiritual reflections need only to read what Michael Whelan, SM (Parish Priest) writes either in his Sunday scripture reflection on the cover of the weekly parish bulletin or his 1-page reflections offered at the back of the church, e.g. "Marist Presence: Nazareth", "Becoming Aware of God in My Life", "The Grace of the Present Moment". Additionally, our parish bulletin often includes insightful spiritual and social justice observations from Tom Ryan, SM

### **Who Goes to Novenas These Days?**



I have friends who say no one wants to attend a novena anymore. That may be true in some parts. It is not true at St. Patrick's where the Novena of Our Lady of Perpetual Help is celebrated every Wednesday at 12:30 pm and 5 pm. I am astounded at the number of people who gather for the noon Mass and stay for the 12:30 Novena or gather for the 12:30 Novena and remain for the 1:05 Mass. My friends who believe only grandparents want to attend a novena these days are incorrect. The Wednesday afternoon novena in particular attracts quite an eclectic crowd that ranges in ages and ethnicity. The gathering reminds me of the Nicene Creed and how we are "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church."



### **Food for the Body**

This city centre ministry does not just focus on the spiritual hunger of those who gather. We are keenly aware of the physical hunger of God's People. For example, every Saturday Sister Fedelis McTeigue, SM and her team of volunteers work with parishioners, local college students, and other like-minded people who are concerned about the welfare of the homeless to offer 60 or more homeless people a full breakfast. Our guests are offered tea, coffee, juice, cereal, fruit, cooked eggs and sausages, breads, etc. Additionally, clean clothes and toiletries are available to anyone who wants them.



I am particularly struck by the dedication of Bob Barber, SM (Provincial of Province of Australia). Every Saturday I am in the courtyard I see Bob there grilling the sausages and eggs that are served starting at 6:30 am.