

I continue this week to bring you up to date with some of the key projects and actions that are happening in the parish.

### **Emergency Food Relief**

With the absence of the Office Manager position now, the need to recruit more volunteers has become apparent. It is not only a safety issue to only have one volunteer rostered, but with the increase in demand on the service the numbers of clients seeking assistance is often too much for one volunteer to manage. I am delighted that, following a request to the parishioners of Christ Church, South Yarra (CCSY), we have three new volunteers joining the team, with a fourth from CCSY expected to join soon. It has been decided to consolidate our food distribution onto one day of the week only, and combine the Hawksburn volunteers (who previously worked on either Tuesday or Wednesday) with the new CCSY volunteers to form teams of three people each week. From Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September, then, we will offer food distribution from 10am-1pm each **Tuesday** of every week.

### **Playgroup**

This has continued to be well supported in 2016, with each of the four sessions per week being almost fully subscribed. As well as the obvious benefits to the children who attend, as they learn important social skills and enjoy a healthy snack and fun music and movement, the benefits also extend to the parents and carers who come. For many of these people, they are struggling with aspects of parenting, and still learning how to be the best parent they can. The opportunity to talk to other people in the same position, swap stories, and support one another is very important. We are blessed to have Rachel as our Playgroup Coordinator, as she is involved as a social support to many of the parents who are in need, or who have complex social situations. Her work often goes well beyond her contracted hours, and we are looking to recognise this with an increase in her remuneration at the start of the next Church financial year. We will also be advertising shortly for a Playgroup Assistant, utilising the funds we received from a charitable grant late last year.

### **Refugee Outreach**

Although in its early stages, I am excited to inform you that a joint committee from St. Martin's and CCSY is looking at how our parishes can best support the important work of reaching out to refugees and asylum seekers. Led by Jenny Jordan, this group will report regularly to the Parish Council, who will be responsible for resourcing the recommendations of the group.

Next week I will update you on the final outstanding issues, including the work of the *Achieving More Together* committee and an update on Messy Church.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the Saints walk with you this week... *Sam*