



# **OPENING AND DEDICATION OF ST MADELEINE SOPHIE BARAT PARISH CHURCH**

Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv  
Bishop of Parramatta  
24th November 2019  
Feast of Christ the King



DIOCESE of  
PARRAMATTA

*Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe*

Dear friends,

Congratulations on the occasion of the opening of your new church, St Madeleine, Kenthurst.

What is a parish community today?

We find the best description of such a community curiously in the early Church in the Acts of the Apostles:

"Those who welcomed the message of Jesus... devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and distribute the proceeds to all as any had need. Day by day they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."

The parish of tomorrow must be more dearly the place where people are led to a real sense of faith in Jesus Christ.

It is a place where God's mercy is encountered in a society, which can at times be ruthlessly un-merciful.

The Christian community will evangelize not through polemics and enunciations, but through living its life in a way which wins the respect, the goodwill and the confidence of "all the people".

Yes, may St Madeleine's continue to be outgoing and missionary. May God bless you, as you continue to be Christ's servant to all, especially those who are in most need in your local community.

I remain yours in Christ

Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen  
OFM Conv DD STL  
Bishop of Parramatta



*Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?  
If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him.  
For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple"  
1 Corinthians 3: 16-17*

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We had a passion ... the passion did not die down ... we kept up the spirit and waited for a long time with hope and prayer... God did not disappoint us.

After celebrating our faith-filled Sacramental celebrations at the Parish worship Centre for the last 32 years, we, the faith-filled members of the St. Madeleine's community, are moving into our own church building annexed with parish office and a small function centre. We are very proud of being in the beautiful, new church. Our hearts are filled with love and gratitude for God's guidance and His inspiration to reach this milestone in the history of our parish. Jesus is the unifying force of our community, which is very well symbolized with a Cross in the middle of the courtyard of the new church.



I thank God for all His provisions to this happy end and we begin to write a new chapter with the opening of the new church. The entire development project is a significant moment for our vibrant, hospitable, welcoming community. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my predecessor Fr. Chris Dixon and Bishop Emeritus Vincent Heather, Bishop Emeritus Kevin Manning, Archbishop Anthony Fisher (Sydney), Sr. Anna Conway, and the former parishioners (living and passed away) towards this project. Bishop Vincent Long has given incredible support and encouragement in building up this church and the parish community, the Body of Christ. On behalf of the community, I would like to render my heartfelt thanks to him. I would like to thank everyone in our present community who has embraced, encouraged and supported this project significantly. Your small or big contribution is gratefully appreciated. I do pray that we be blessed by God!

Our grand opening of the new church is not the finish line. It is the starting line! It is only the beginning of an exciting new direction for our parish. We have to partner with each other as a community and launch fresh initiatives and deepen our commitment to God and to our universal community with more people than ever before. As the Word of God says in Philipians 1:6 "...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus". I wish that St Madeleine's stands out as an icon of Faith, love and justice.

God's blessings

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Fr. Vincent Savarimuthu". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Fr. Vincent Savarimuthu  
Parish Priest

# Our Story

Here in Kenthurst, we gather on Country on which members and Elders of the Darug nation have been custodians for thousands of years and on which the Darug people have performed age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of the region.

**1836** Communities of Kenthurst –Dural part of established Parramatta Parish; later became part of North Parramatta, known as Waitematta.

**1860's and 70's** Masses occasionally held by visiting priest at 96 Kenthurst Road, the home of the Blake family.

**1909–1913** Small stone church built by local parishioners. Church opened in July and dedicated to the Blessed Madeleine Sophie Barat who was canonised in 1925.

**1960** Fibro house on six acres at Dural was bought, converted for use as a Mass centre and named in honour of St Joseph. At both places of worship, strong faithful communities met to celebrate the Eucharist each Sunday. Visiting priests would come for the 8.am Mass at Dural and the 9.30 Mass at Kenthurst with the Benedictine Monastery at Arcadia providing a priest as well.

**1970** Castle Hill became a parish, which included Kenthurst.

**1985** As a result of growth, both blocks of land at Kenthurst and Dural, as well as the bequeathed 'Porter's Road' land, were sold and proceeds used to purchase the twenty acre site at Annangrove Road from the descendants of the Blake family by the Castle Hill Parish. Here it was hoped that a Primary and Secondary school as well as a new church would be built.

**1987** St Madeleine's Primary School and Mass Centre opened and 'shoeless' parishioners, surrounded by mud, on a very wet Holy Thursday evening celebrated one of the first Masses in the new Mass centre.

**1988** Marian College, local Secondary School opened. Permission given for new Parish to be formed and Sr Anna Conway, from the Mercy sisters, was appointed to bring the two communities together before a priest was appointed.

Kenthurst Parish formed from the two communities of St Joseph's at Dural and St Madeleine Sophie Barat's at Kenthurst. On May 22nd Bishop Bede Heather officially established the parish of St Madeleine Sophie with Rev Christopher Dixon as the first Parish Priest.

**1988–2007** Construction and expansion of both St Madeleine's Primary School and Marian Catholic College proceeded in response to the growing educational needs of Catholic children and families in the area. Throughout these years the parish community

of St Madeleine's continued to flourish and worship in the Mass centre, celebrating Mass and many liturgical, sacramental and social celebrations.

**1989** First 'Kenthurst Country Fair', the first of many Country Fairs which, not only supported the Parish and others, but also built a strong and cohesive community.

**2007** Bishop Kevin Manning gave the Parish permission to purchase five acres for the specific purpose of constructing a permanent church in compliance with the policies of the Parramatta Diocese.

**2009** Fundraising committee established and campaign launched to organise fundraising activities such as a dinner dance.

**2011** Rev Christopher Dixon concludes his time as Parish Priest and Rev Vincent Savarimuthu is appointed administrator and in 2013 is appointed as Parish Priest.

**2012–2013** Parish discussions were resumed regarding the possibility of building a permanent church.

**2015** Diocese granted Parish permission to lodge a Development Application for the construction of a permanent church.

**2016** Initial Development Application lodged in July.

**2017** Final Development Application lodged.

**2018** February, a Gala Dinner Dance was organised in order to garner support for the building of the new church. In June, final Development Application approved for place of worship and associated car park and landscaping works.

**2018** 1st July Most Rev Vincent Long OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta, celebrated Mass and then turned the first sod of ground where the new church will be built.





# As a family we grow...

**S**t Madeleine's parish is emboldened by an active and engaged parish community. An active parish council from the outset has sought to involve as many parishioners as possible in parish life whether it be family groups, discussion groups, prayer and meditation groups, sacramental preparation, playgroups and youth groups.

Many groups have emerged and continued to thrive over time. Family groups in Kenthurst, initiated approximately 40 years ago, continue to grow and play a significant role in the life of St Madeleine's parish. The philosophy of these groups was based on the value of getting to know and to care for one another in difficult times as well as sharing time with one another by enjoying simple family functions and outings.

Another significant community occasion is the Country Fair which was originally held on May 7th 1989. The Country Fair is legendary in the area and one year a phenomenal 30,000 people attended. It has continued to grow and each year is a symbol of the inspirational teamwork, the tireless efforts and the presence of a wonderful spirit that emanates throughout the parish community.

Many groups that have been created have grown out of a desire to meet specific and changing needs of the community. Activities such as a Women's and Men's breakfast get together, the Friendship group's Christmas

lunches and the Music Ministry provide opportunities for all members of the Parish to come together and share in conversation and common interests. The Ministry to the Nursing Homes, the Catechist (SRE) team, RCIA team, the Sacramental team and the St Vincent de Paul chapter reach out beyond the Parish and play a critical role in the life of the Parish.

Other groups that meet regularly include the Liturgy team which coordinates many ministries such as music, reading, welcoming, junior and senior servers and Eucharistic ministers. In addition, the Liturgical Service group attends to the needs of the church and the Parish Life group organises a Children's Liturgy for our younger members of the Parish .

In the past, there has been a youth group which provided our younger parishioners with an opportunity to participate in the Mass and enjoy fellowship. As we move into our new church we pray that these young people will own the Parish and lead the community to grow in faith, love and justice.

Inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit and the Gospel, St Madeleine Sophie Barat Parish, a community of faith and service, through the sacramental celebrations and various communal activities, strives to be a witness for Christ's love far and wide, reflecting the humility and wisdom of St Madeleine the patroness of the parish.







# Our New Church – Over Thirty Years In The Making

**“This is a dream come true.”**

**T**he Kenthurst parish is a very large parish which extends from Castle Hill and Glenhaven in the south as far as Wiseman’s Ferry to the north. Our new church will accommodate not only our current parishioners, but the many families who will become part of our developing community in the future.

Alleanza Architecture designed the new church and describes it as a synthesis of current church planning which incorporates all liturgical reforms of the Vatican within a building form that evokes a modern interpretation of traditional churches.

The scale of the building is very suited to its beautiful natural setting with the architectural form visually ‘softened’ by the developed landscape surrounding the church.

The entry to the church is via a cloistered forecourt- again a modern interpretation of churches constructed during the early years of Christianity. Besides providing an ambience appropriate to the ceremonies, such as Palm Sunday, that now take place at entrances, the forecourt allows for informal gatherings, before and after church services and enables all of the ancillary parish functions, now associated with parish administration and church use, to be appropriately located without



impinging on the strong architectural form of the church.

The planning is ‘modern’, being fan-shaped to minimise seating distances from the sanctuary. Although almost square in plan, the 3-dimensional form of the church is divided into sanctuary, nave



and lower sides. This allows a sensitive play of internal light, promotes natural ventilation and gives a visual appearance of elongation, with the nave, clerestory windows and side aisles reminiscent of traditional churches.

Father Vince, quoting Pope Francis, believes that this church will be a "hospital for the wounded," and a spiritual love home for everyone. The completion of this church will mean further growth in terms of 'spirituality, faith and unity. It's not just the building; we are trying to build the people of God.'

Our new church has been fitted out with wonderful wood carvings, inspirational stained glass windows and significant religious icons. On approaching the precinct, we are welcomed by the Cross in the centre of the courtyard flanked by the Parish centre and the Parish office.

In light of the beautiful bush setting of our church, it was felt that natural timber was the best element for the religious items that adorn the sanctuary. Engelbert Piccolruaz, the sculptor, has depicted on the lectern, the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John who are characterised by the symbols of a winged man, winged lion, winged ox and eagle respectively. Each of these four symbols has a relationship to the evangelist and also is mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel in the Bible. In the middle of the lectern is the symbol of the Lamb, referring to the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. The panel on the baptismal font represents the Baptism of Jesus.

The base of the altar is a representation of the Last Supper to remind us that we celebrate 'in memory of Him' as we share



in His Body and Blood in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Looking towards the sanctuary, on the left hand side there is a wood carving representing God the Father: 'I have carved you on the palms of my hands.'

**(Isaiah 49.15)** In the centre is the Risen Christ on the Cross which brings both hope and strength in terms of the redemptive power of suffering.

On the right, is a symbol of God, the Holy Spirit, a dove-like presence bringing 'wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord' **(Isaiah 11.2).**

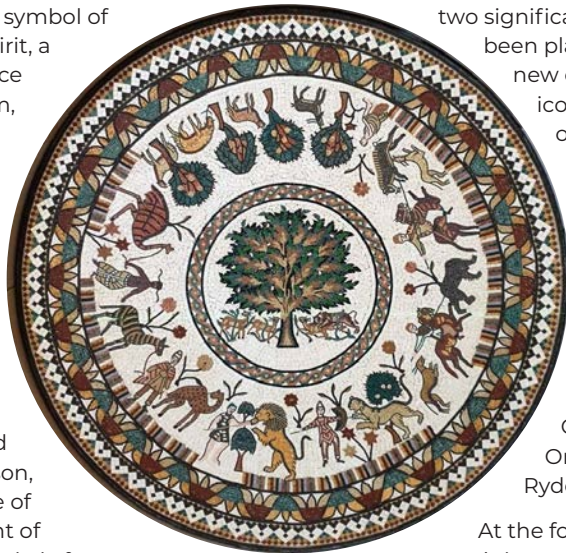
The stained glass windows in our new church, designed by Paddy Robinson, bring out the fire of faith and the light of Christ in a very artistic form. The element of fire is significant to Madeleine Sophie who was born prematurely on the night of December 12, 1779, next door to a house fire of their neighbour. The theme of 'Faith and Light' runs through every piece of stained glass in the Church. As you enter the church on the left hand side, the symbols for the sacraments of Marriage, Confirmation and Baptism are

replicated. The remaining sacraments of the Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Reconciliation are symbolised on the long widows on the opposite side. As the centre and the source of Christian life, the sacrament of the Eucharist is well symbolised by the tabernacle in the middle of the sanctuary.

In valuing tradition and respecting our strong connections to the past,

two significant icons have been placed in the

new church: the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour from the Chapel and the hand-carved Stations of the Cross which originally came from the St Brigid's Convent and Orphanage in Ryde.



At the foot of Mother Mary's image is the "Tree of Life" mosaic created by an artisan

named Malek, from Jordan. Historically, the tree is deemed a symbol of life and the mosaic depicts gazelles grazing under one side of an apple tree and a lion hunting a gazelle on the other side. Ultimately, they die and their bodies return to earth to replenish the soil depicting a thoughtful philosophy about life and eternity.



## **Saint Madeleine's Prayer**

Sacred Heart of Jesus,  
Give me a heart that is one with your own;  
A humble heart that knows and loves its nothingness;  
A gentle heart that holds and calms its own anxiety;  
A loving heart that has compassion for the suffering of others;  
A pure heart that recoils even at the appearance of evil;  
A detached heart that longs for nothing other than the  
goodness of heaven;  
A heart detached from self-love and embraced  
by the love of God,  
Its attention focused on God,  
Its goodness its only treasure  
in time and in eternity.  
Amen.