

History of St Edwards Parish 2015 to 2025.

In 2015 St Edwards Parish South Tamworth welcomed a new priest Father Paul Aguilar from the Philippines to take over from Father John Willis who retired to Nazareth House. Fr Aguilar had previously served as a curate at St Edwards a few years before hand and, thus, was familiar with much of the activities of the parish. Fr Paul had served at the Cathedral at Armidale and as priest at Wee Waa so he had experience of the New England and Western Plains life-style.

Being a new young priest from the Philippines Fr Paul attracted a following of his countrymen and women and began a transformation of the parish into a multi-cultural parish. Catholic migrants from the Philippines, Myanmar, Vietnam, Karen and the Fijian Islands to name a few, flocked to St Edwards parish often to celebrate Mass and to sing in celebration of their culture in their native languages. Migrant Sunday Mass became a feature of worship at our Church.

The next twelve years saw four distinct changes in the life of St Edwards parish. These changes also reflected the cultural expansion of Tamworth which

now boasts of a population comprising over 80 different nationalities. The celebrations at Mass took on a different and colorful interpretation and worship often being very meaningful even to the other parishioners.

Secondly the parish social activities became more vibrant and the various communities celebrated special days with pageantry and magnificent culinary repasts. These feats were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone from their own communities and from the other groups as well.

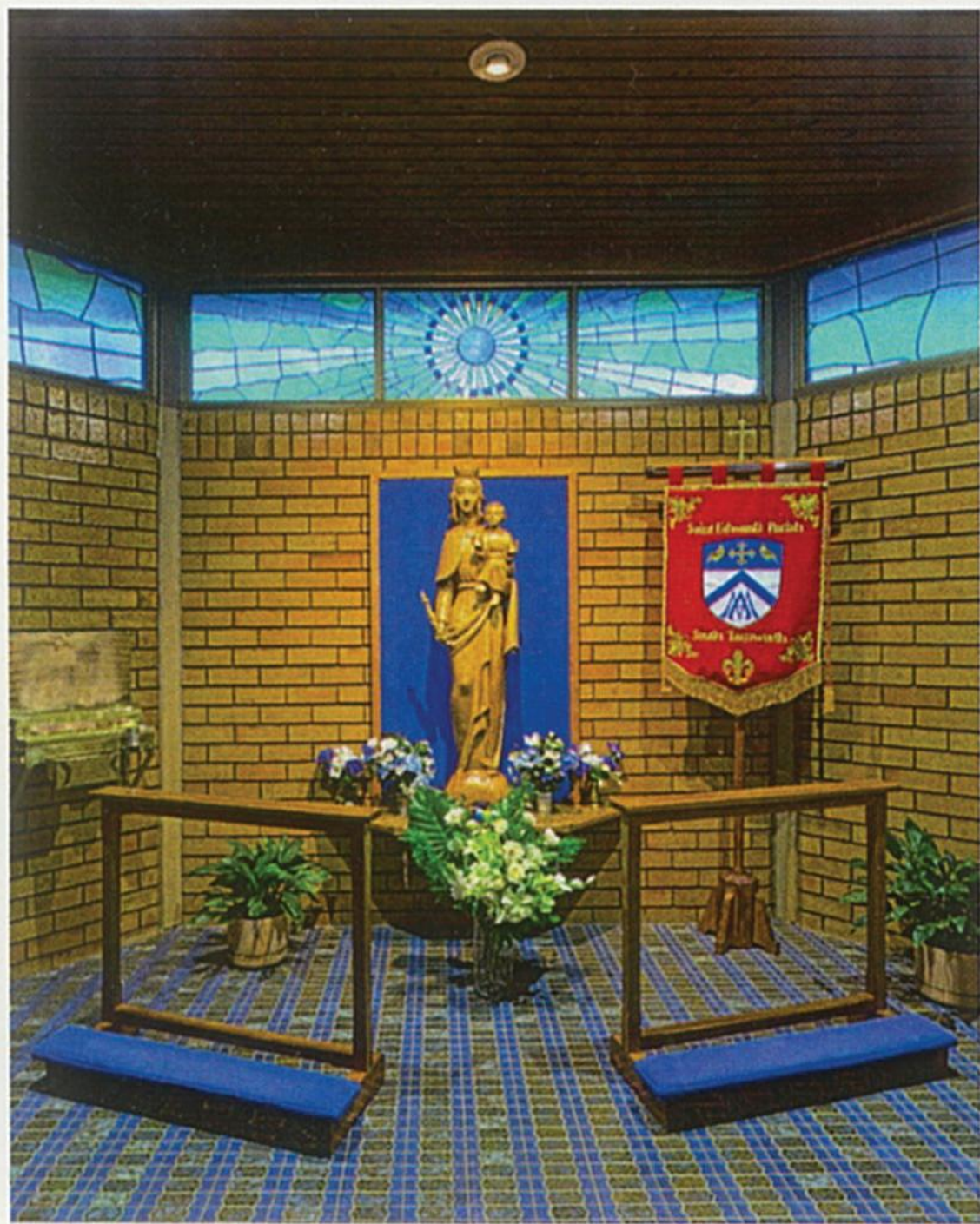
The third change was to the physical structures in and around the church. The altar was renovated with the erection of a new cross as a centre-piece above the altar and positioning of three new pictures on the altar itself. Also a special grotto was positioned at the side altar with a relic from Saint Mary McKillop.

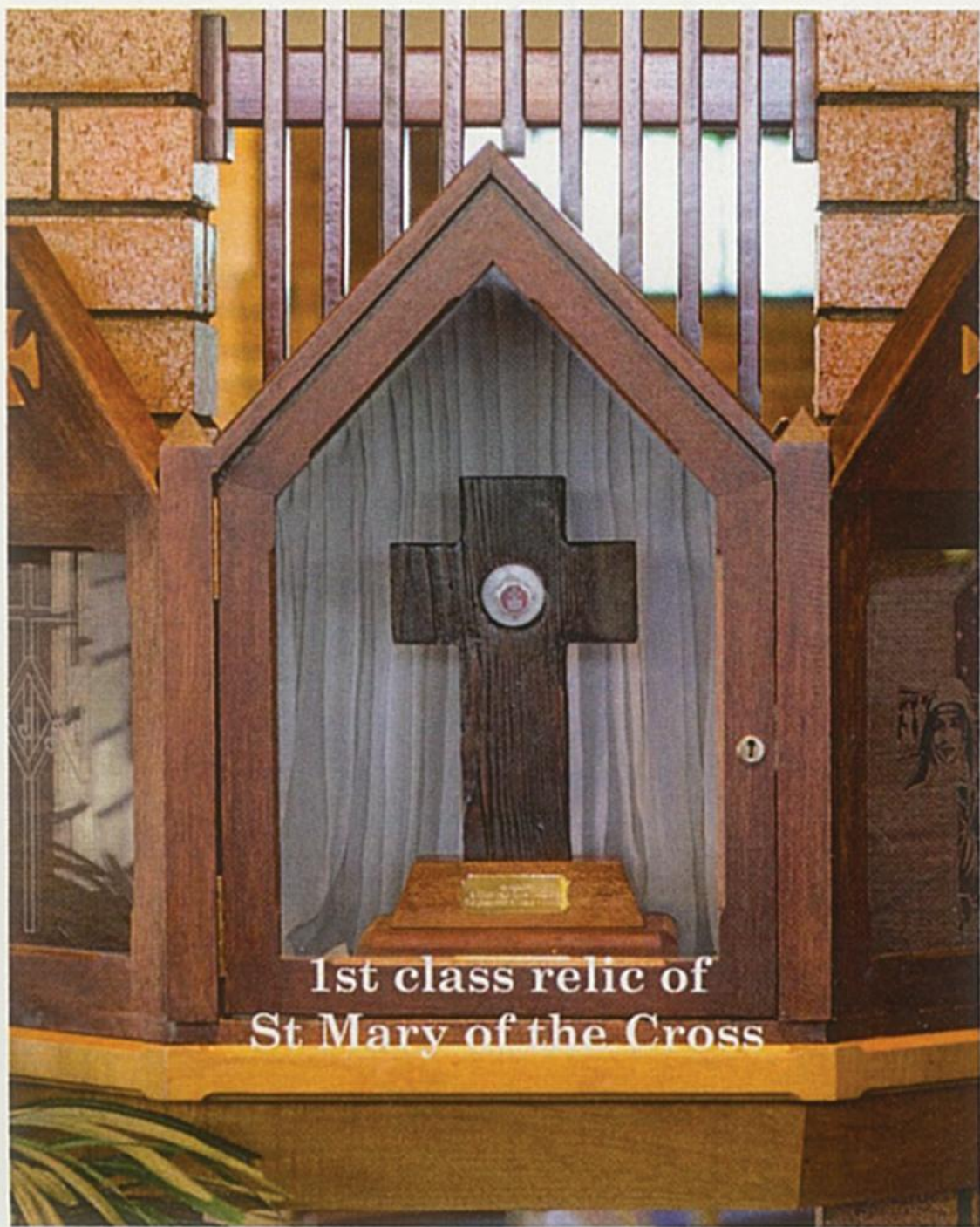
Of special action was the erection of the War Memorial Bell Tower which was originally envisaged when the new church was erected over 50 years ago. Similarly the Sacred Door was positioned at the entrance to the church as a place of pilgrimage.

Father Paul left us in late 2023 having seen the parish transform into a variation of a traditional Australian Catholic parish with a multi-cultural focus in keeping with the cities' population growth.

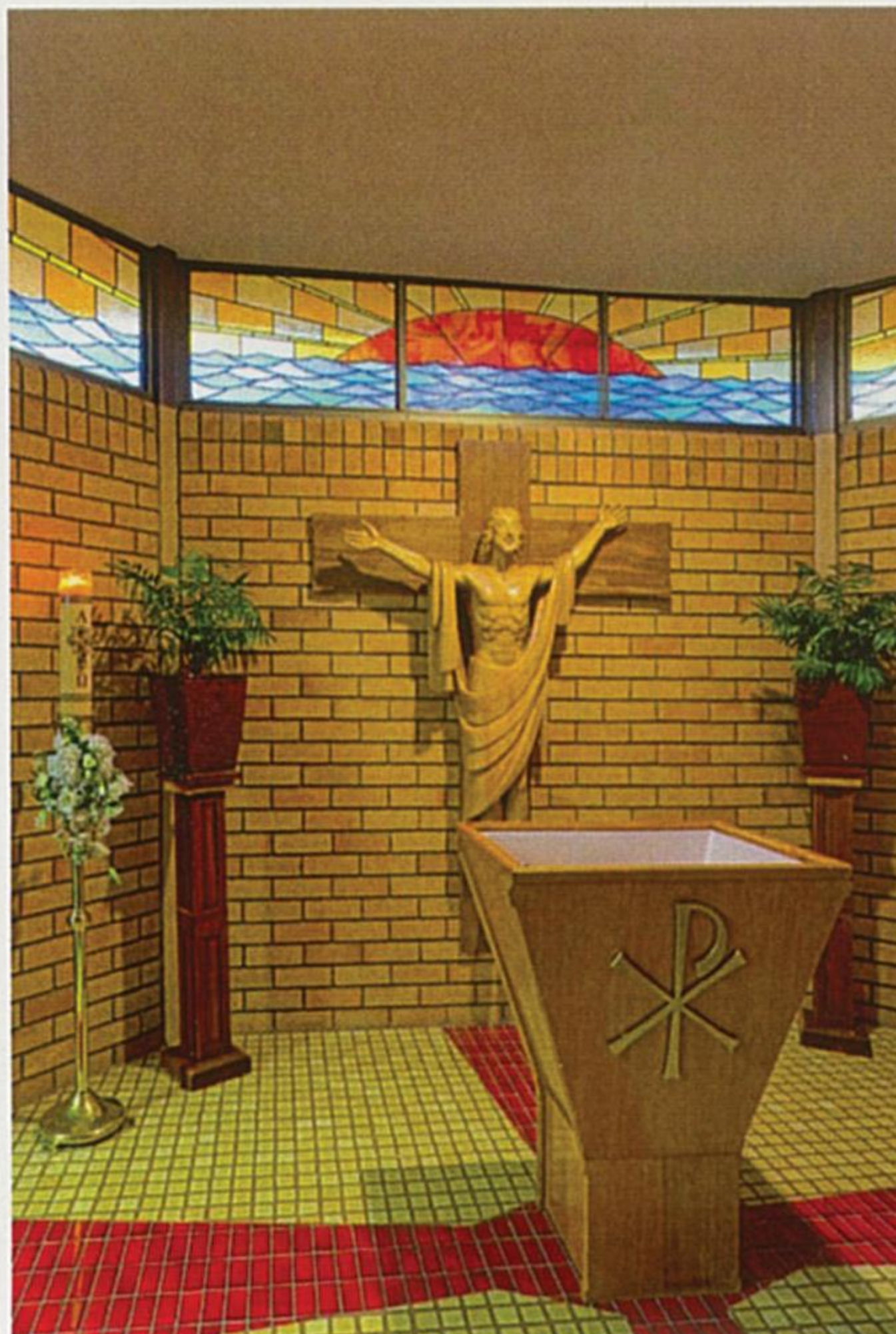
In early 2024 Fr Roelle Llave, also from the Philippines who was ordained with Fr Paul, was appointed as priest in charge which position was upgraded to Parish Priest in September 2025. Along with the upgraded appointment, Father Mario Mendoza was assigned to the Parish as an assistant. Fr Rolle has continued with the work of Fr Paul and has commenced celebrating Mass at the new retirement centre at the Longyard Complex.

The history of the parish that follows is in pictorial format with thanks to Grahame Tighe's many important and special photos. They celebrate the transformation of St Edwards' Parish into a multi-cultural parish where all are welcome and encouraged to celebrate in their traditional cultures.

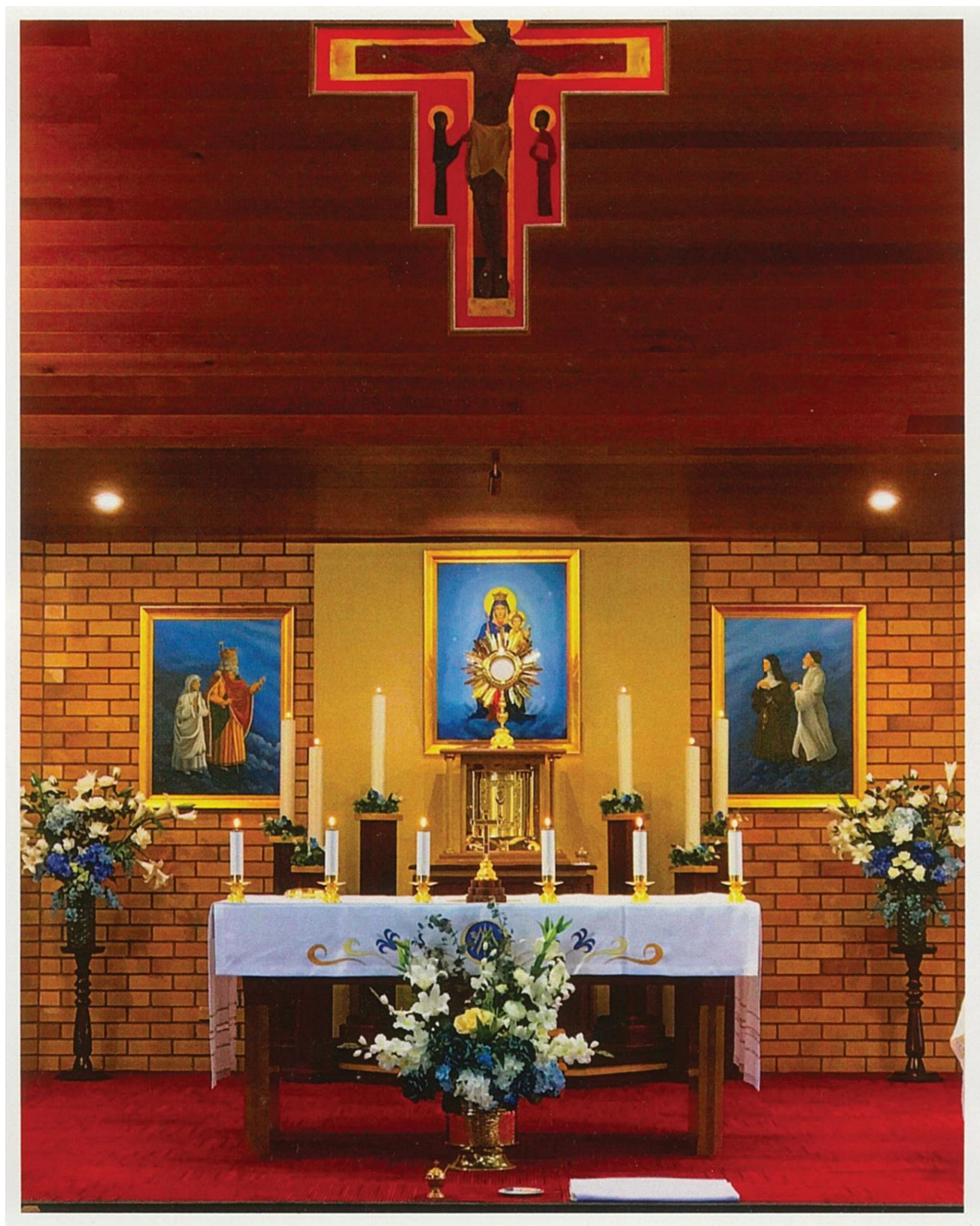


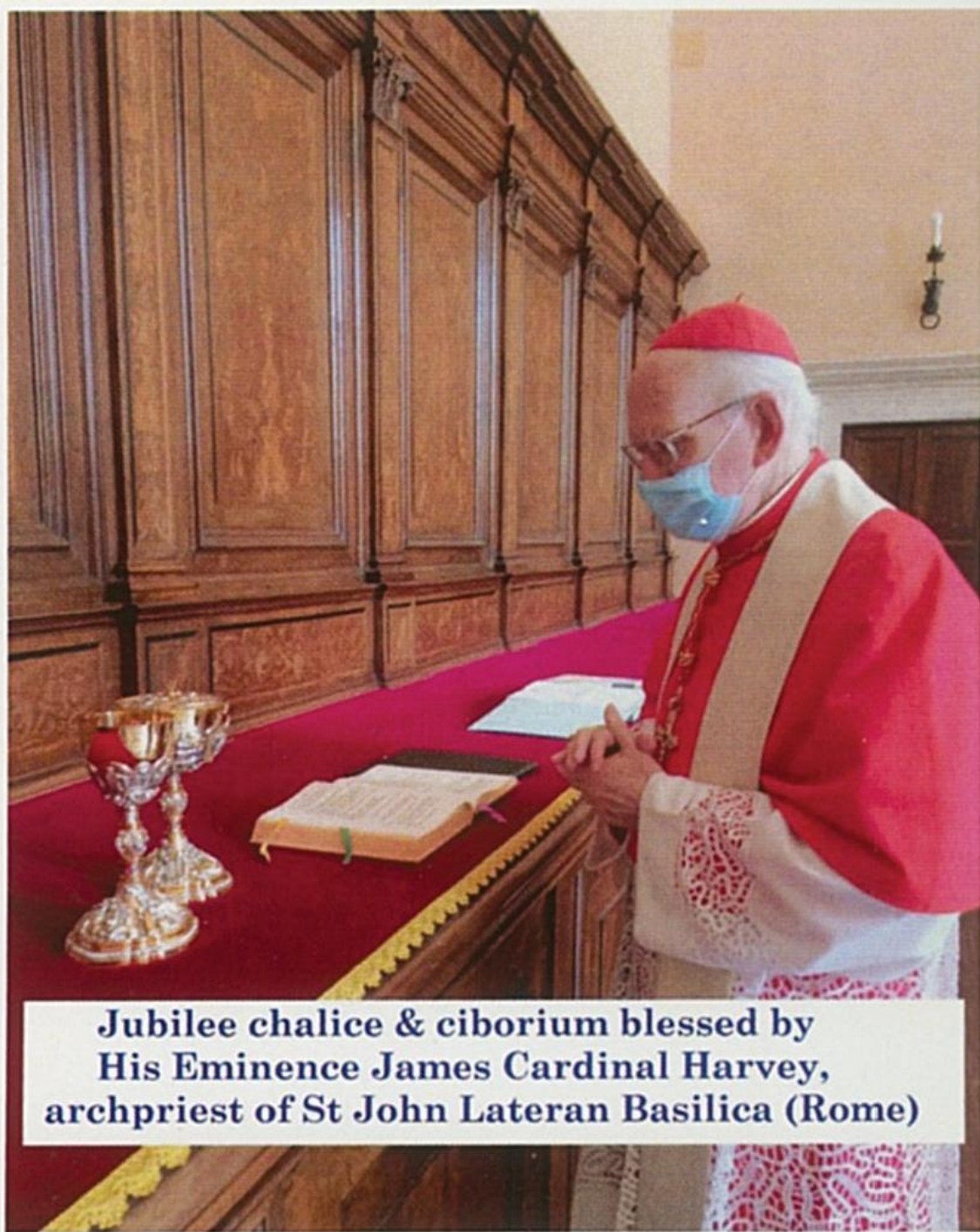


1st class relic of
St Mary of the Cross



The new altar.





**Jubilee chalice & ciborium blessed by
His Eminence James Cardinal Harvey,
archpriest of St John Lateran Basilica (Rome)**

Vietnamese Mass.



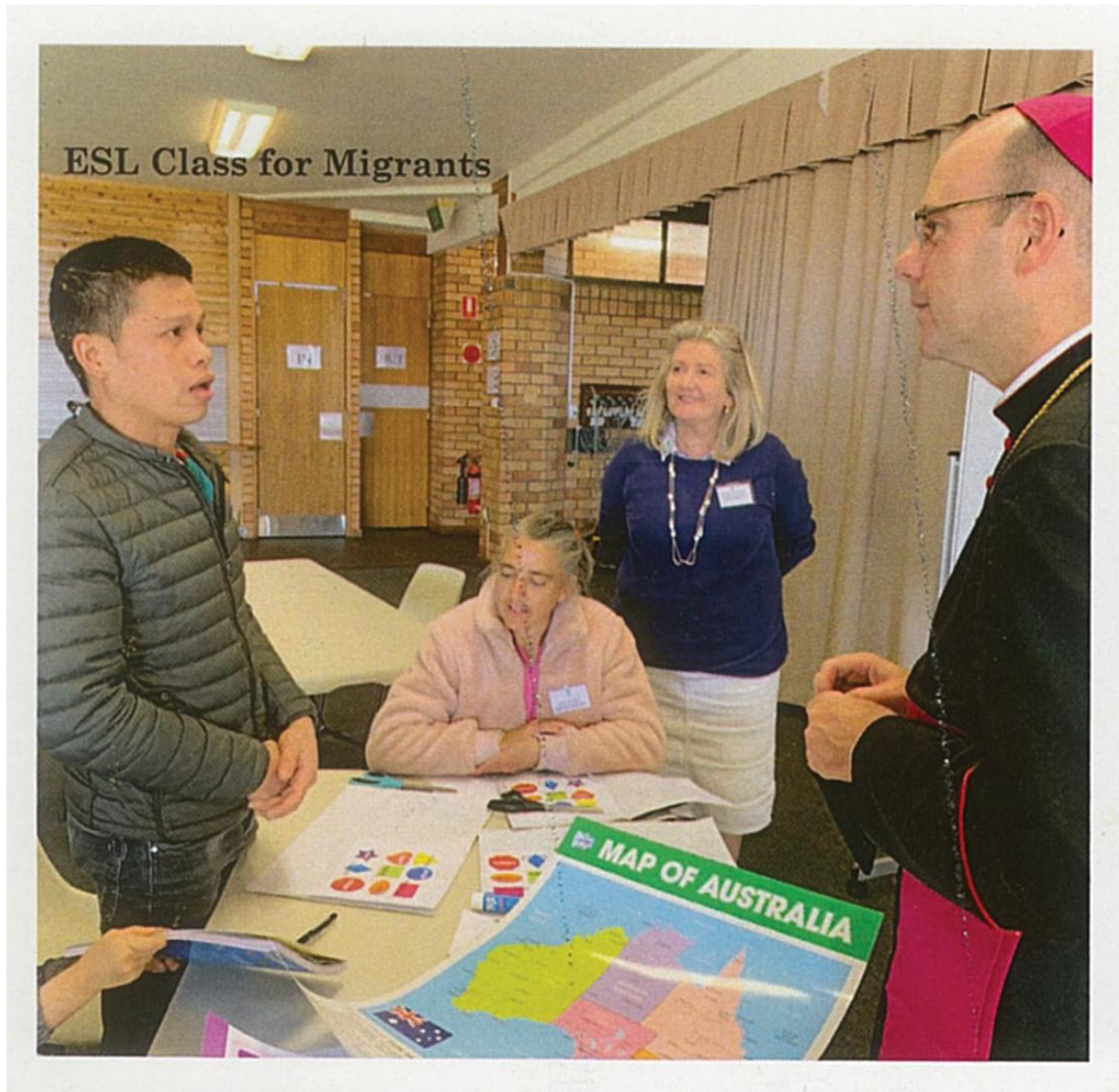
Mass for the Myanmar Community.



Mass for Filipino Community.



ESL Class.



Papal Nuncio visit.





100th Anniversary of Fatima





Doing it for our farmers



Mother Teresa's Pantry
COVID-19 Relief



Blessing & opening of the Holy Door
13 November 2021

Christmas Pageant 2015



A Special Choir



A special community.



Mass and lunch or Consecrated Life





Mass for Queen Elizabeth 2.



Migrant Mass Sept 2022



Vietnamese Christening.



Welcome to the community.



Migrant Mass



Bishop blesses the Holy Door.



Ladies Reunion 2017



Fatima celebration 2017.



Children of Fatima. 1917



Children's Mass 2019.



Choir 2019



Papal Medal 2019





Flags at Mass 2019



Children's Mass.



Migrant Mass 2022



Rosary 2022.



School Children at Bell Tower 2023.



Sod turning





Distinguished guests at Bell Tower



Memorial Tower 2023.



Plaque on display at Bell Tower.

The Australian Defence Force Memorial Bell Tower

This memorial bell tower was erected to fulfill the wishes of the original parishioners of St Edward's Parish to have the present Mary Help of Christians Church dedicated as a war memorial church.

On the occasion of the 60th jubilee of the parish (2021) and the 40th anniversary of the blessing of the present church (2023), the construction of this monument was made possible with the assistance of Legacy Australia, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, parishioners and local businesses.

Dedicated on the 4th of July 2023 to the glory of God who made the supreme sacrifice for all, and to those who served in the defence of the values of Australia and the free world.

Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP
Member for
New England

Rev. Fr Paul Aguilar
Parish Priest

Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Assistant Minister
for Veterans' Affairs

Bishop's Medal Recipients 2023.

