

Mackenzie Catholic Parish
AGM – 23 November 2024
Albury – Tekapo – Twizel – Fairlie
Parish Priest's Report
Fr. Tien Cao

1. Introduction

Our parish has been showered with many blessings from the Lord, who is present in us and among us. As Scripture reminds us, *“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights”* (James 1:17).

I warmly welcome everyone here this morning and thank you for your presence. I am deeply grateful to all who have contributed to the well-being of our parish over the past year since our last AGM in May 2024.

I especially thank the Parish Council, the Finance Committee, the Servant Leadership Team, and the many generous volunteers who assist with rosters, music, Holy Communion, hospitality, cleaning, flowers, liturgical ministries, school support, and the maintenance of our properties and facilities. Your service is a living witness to your faith in Jesus Christ.

I am also encouraged that a few parishioners who were not attending Mass when I first arrived have now begun returning, and some are volunteering. This is a sign that the Lord is at work in our midst. May we continue to recognize his love and His power.

2. Overview of the Past Year

Worship and Sacramental Life

Our annual Mass count shows that Sunday attendance has remained steady, with occasional increases. Through the celebration of the sacraments, we see that the Lord is truly present among us:

- Jesus nourishes us with the Eucharist each week in Fairlie and Twizel, and every month in Tekapo.
- Although we had only one baptism this year, the Lord continues to add to our number.
- He strengthens the sick through anointing and accompanies families in times of loss as we bury the dead.

Feast Days and Liturgical Celebrations

- **St Joseph's Feast Day (19 March):** A joyful celebration with students and parents, followed by morning tea.
- **Ash Wednesday:** Well attended in both Twizel and Fairlie. During Lent, many donated food to the local resource centre to support those in need.
- **Stations of the Cross:** Held weekly with a small but faithful group both in Twizel and in Fairlie.

Parish Administration and Facilities

- I thank the Parish Council and Finance Committee for their consistent work throughout the year.
- Special thanks to Gary Brosnahan and other members of our parish for organizing and cutting down the trees by the hall.
- The school has installed a new fence to increase student safety.

Pastoral Care

Jesus visits our homes and the sick through the ministry of the Church. Three parishioners who were being cared for at home have now moved to Timaru for their retirement. I express sincere gratitude to Christine O'Connel for faithfully bringing Holy Communion to the homebound.

3. Highlights in Parish Ministries

- ✚ One of our significant moments this year was the Prayer Vigil for Peace, which was open to all. We were blessed to welcome members from other Christian churches who prayed with us for the needs of the world.
- ✚ A group of nine parishioners attended the Prayer Conference in Temuka, joining others from around the diocese as part of the Jubilee Year "Pilgrimage of Hope." This was a grace-filled experience for all involved.
- ✚ School Adoration continues each term. During Adoration, The children have been taught about the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and guide them in simple self-examination: giving thanks, being grateful, and saying sorry.
- ✚ The school has been doing well, and for more information, please check the school report
- ✚ We also continue to work on safeguarding, and in December a diocesan officer will visit to give a presentation and assist us in strengthening our practices.

4. Finance

My sincere thanks to Leonie Guiney, Corrine Swan and our Finance Committee for their expertise, stewardship, and diligence. Thank you also to all parishioners for your generous financial support. Without your commitment, we would not be able to fulfil the mission entrusted to our parish.

For more information, please check the finance report

5. Leadership Team and New Parish Vision

Our Senior Leadership Team has now become the Servant Leadership Team, meeting every second week from 6:30–8:00am for prayer, reflection, and planning. We have had two retreats this year with Fr John O'Connor, with a third one scheduled for the end of November.

After much prayer, discernment, and dialogue, and fittingly on Mission Sunday, 19 October; we introduced our new parish vision:

Vision for the Mackenzie Catholic Parish: *A community of intentional disciples, united and guided by the Holy Spirit of the Risen Lord,*
*focusing on: **Worship – Evangelization – Service.***

To support this vision:

- ✚ We continue praying the Prayer to the Holy Spirit at the start of Mass.
- ✚ Next year, the vision will be explored through seven parish talks.
- ✚ 3 of us attended the parish renewal – Hope & Summit in Palmerston North last Oct
- ✚ Katie Fouhy has been employed to help coordinate our work of evangelization.

✚ We continue to use Alpha as a key tool for evangelization and discipleship.

This year we offered two Alpha Pilot courses (Twizel and Fairlie) from March to July, followed by a second Alpha now being run by Katie; one for young people on Monday evenings and another on Sunday after Mass. One young person said: *“Alpha gives me a space where I can talk about my faith freely with people my age... It’s the only place I can do that.”*

6. Upcoming – Advent Season

- Reconciliation with Anointing of the Sick will be offered after Sunday Mass and for the homebound.
- I encourage everyone to:
 - Pray regularly—both personally and as a community.
 - Attend Sunday Mass faithfully and consider weekday Mass when possible.
 - Deepen your knowledge of Scripture.
 - Support parish events and activities.

7. Evangelization: The Heart of Our Mission

In 1974, Pope Saint Paul VI reminded the Church in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (§14) that proclaiming the Gospel is not just one task among others, but our very identity and purpose. He wrote:

“The Church exists in order to evangelize.”

“She is born of evangelizing activity... She begins by being evangelized herself.”

This vision guides us today. The Church receives the Gospel before she proclaims it, and she brings it into every human situation. Evangelization is her deepest identity and our parish mission is part of this ongoing, essential work of Christ.

I move that my report be accepted.

Fr Tien Cao

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