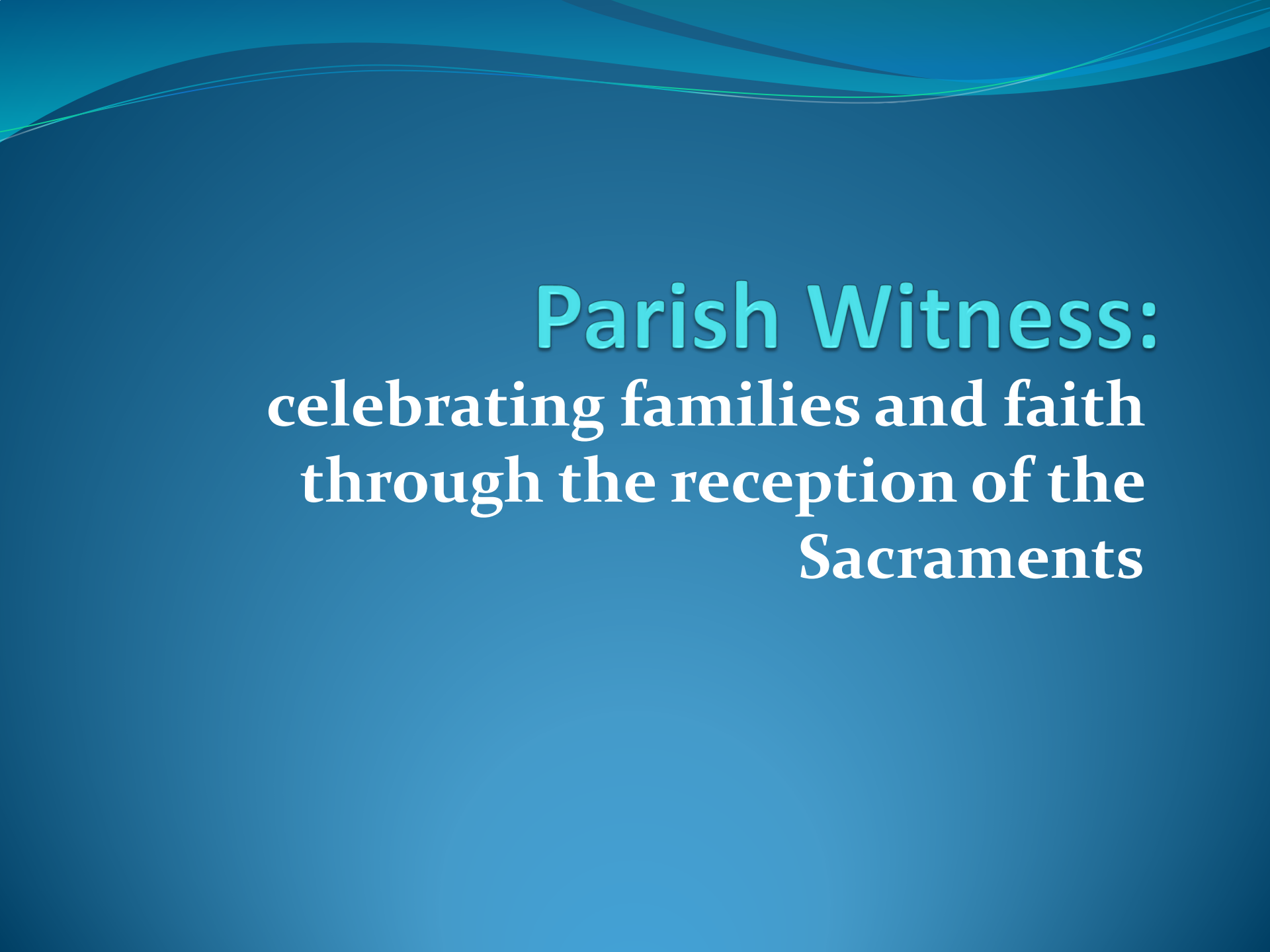


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Parish Witness:

celebrating families and faith
through the reception of the
Sacraments

Role and Purpose of Parish

- “to form disciples who joyfully live out the mission of Jesus Christ” Fr James Mallon, *Divine Renovation*
- “A compassionate community living and celebrating in Christ” *St Simon the Apostle, Rowville*

What is Jesus’ mission?

“I have come that you may have life,
life in abundance”

John 10:10

To bring about the Basileia – Reign of God

What does this life look like?

A life filled with...

Joy

Compassion

Hope

Courage

Forgiveness

Humility

Sense of solidarity

Creativity

Love

Pope Francis says (TED talk – ‘the future you’)

- **Love** is the source and meaning of life
- Love requires a creative, concrete and ingenious attitude
- “One cannot love unless it is at their own expense”
Mother Teresa
- We are precious, each and every one of us; irreplaceable in the eyes of God
- We are called to begin a revolution; a revolution of tenderness



Tenderness is the love that comes close
and becomes real.

It is a movement that starts in our heart
and reaches to our eyes,
the ears and the hands.

Tenderness means to use our eyes
to see the other,
our ears to hear the other;
to listen to the children, the poor,
those who are afraid of the future.



A child's love for their parent grows through their touch, gaze, voice, their tenderness.

This is **tenderness**:

being on the same level as the other.

God descended into Jesus
to be on our level.

Jesus himself took this path,
practising the real, concrete language of love.

Tenderness is the path of the strongest,
most courageous, men and women.

Through humility and concrete love,
power becomes a service, a force for good.



For this to happen –
this revolution of tenderness.

For love to be able to come close and be real.

Decisions have to be made -
investments of time, energy and money
are called for.

What does your Parish invest in?



At St Simon the Apostle, Rowville

we have invested in a
Parish Sacrament Program
(PSP)

Which includes a deep partnership with
the Parish Primary School, families
and Parish.



I hope that the Lord bestows on Christian families the faith,
freedom and courage necessary for their mission.
If family education rediscovers the pride of its leadership,
many things will change for the better,
for uncertain parents and for disappointed children.
It is time for fathers and mothers to return from their exile —
for they have exiled themselves from their children's
upbringing — and to fully resume their educational role.
We hope that the Lord gives this grace to parents:
to not exile themselves from the education of their children.
And this can only be done with love, tenderness
and patience.

Francis spoke on the need for celebration in the rhythm of family life and that celebration is God's invention. "Celebration is first and foremost a loving and grateful look at work well done. ...to look at your children and think: how beautiful!

It's the time to look at our home, the friends we host, the community that surrounds us, and to think: what a good thing!"

Francis tells us that a true moment of celebration is sacred. That family life, real life is a masterpiece of simplicity, beautiful and very good.

And that celebration is a precious gift of God.

In Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, on *love in the family*,

Pope Francis exclaims “The Joy of Love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church.” #1

He recognises the need for sensitivity and enculturation when working among families for principles to be respected and applied, #3 and

the necessity for us always be firmly grounded in reality. #6

He cautions us against the temptation to see families as a problem but rather as an opportunity and “all will called to love and cherish family life.” #7.

Chapter 7 *Towards a better education for children*

Calls for the role of family to be “consciously, enthusiastically, reasonably and appropriately carried out.”

It's within this opportunity that I share with you
our PSP – formed over 18 years.

It includes the Sacraments of



Eucharist

Penance



and Confirmation.

A Community Approach

The foundation of religious education, faith formation, is begun in the family. Enhanced in the Parish Primary School or in the After School RE Program. Once this is established the family is welcomed to enrol their child in the Parish Sacrament Program.

Parish = School + ASRE + Parish team

Why a PSP?

For families, both as adults and as children, and together, to:

- look with new eyes at their Catholic identity and enter into the Christian story
- grow in their love and connection with each other and with God
- create quality time to explore and learn together about the Other
- experience their faith as an integral part of the fabric of their life
- know that they are valued members of the Parish community



For St Simon's School and ASRE Program to:

- know they are precious members of our Parish family - students, teachers, and catechists
- to be part of an integral, collaborative approach to community relationships
- journey together to deepen their faith at these exciting moments of celebration
- give teachers an opportunity to be present in a different mode for their students and their families
- experience vibrant, uplifting, transforming liturgy and events

The responsibilities of the Parish Team are to:

- work collaboratively and creatively with the School Leadership team for a Program that is practical & effective
- through dialogue involve the teachers and catechists
- create, implement and facilitate a Program that it is joy-filled, open to the movement of the Spirit, and dialogical with the Christian narrative

- 
- invite parents and children into a secure, hermeneutical space that is filled with trust but challenges them to meet the Other in ways that stretch, renew and revitalise
 - to assist parents in the discernment of readiness in their children and family
 - pastorally engage with families in love & deep respect knowing we serve & encounter God in & through them

What makes it different?

- ❖ Adult Catechesis including Prayer
 - Parent sessions
- ❖ based around Conversation in the Family
 - Sharing Sheets
- ❖ shared celebration
 - reflection day/night,
 - varied forms of Liturgy

PARISH SACRAMENT PROGRAM

- **EXTRAS**

- ❖ **Prep Family Prayer Night**
- ❖ **Yr 1 Revisiting Baptism Night**
- ❖ **Yr 2 and above - Sacrament Registration**

- **RECONCILIATION PROGRAM**

- ❖ **Commitment Masses**
- ❖ **Parent Sessions (5) 2-3pm or 7.30-8.30pm**
- ❖ **Reconciliation 2nd Rite Celebration**



• EUCHARIST PROGRAM

- ❖ Commitment Masses
- ❖ Parent Sessions (5)
- ❖ Regular attendance and participation at weekend Mass
- ❖ Reflection Evening
- ❖ First Communion Masses

• CONFIRMATION PROGRAM

- ❖ Commitment Masses
- ❖ Parents Sessions (4)
- ❖ Reflection Day
- ❖ Family Penitential Liturgy
- ❖ Confirmation Masses

From St Simon the Apostle Parish

- Purchase a login to Parish Website which includes access to downloadable Sharing Sheets, Parent Sheet / Cheat Sheet, Facilitators notes

✓ \$100 per Sacrament

And/or Jacqui Giuliano share resources and ideas jgiuliano@stsimonsparish.com.au



Let us make this journey as families,
let us keep walking together.
What we have been promised is greater
than we can imagine.
May we never lose heart
because of our limitations,
or ever stop seeking
that fullness of love and communion
which God holds out before us.

Amen