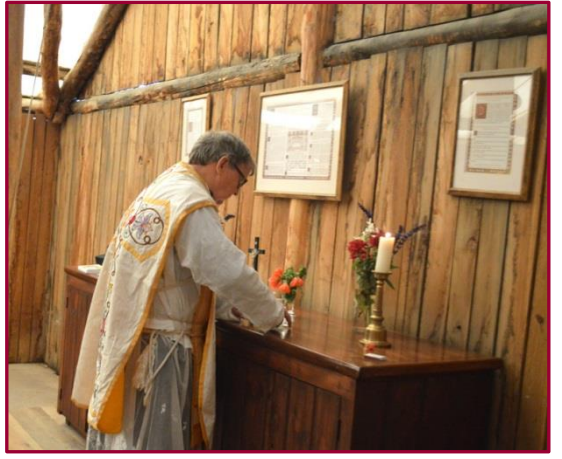# MASS AT SOVEREIGN HILL

Enthusiastic singing voices could be heard across the goldfields at Sovereign Hill on Monday, May 25 2015. Students, principals, teachers and CEO staff gathered as a faith community in St Alipius Diggings Catholic Church to celebrate the conclusion of Catholic Education Week 2015.

St Alipius Diggings Catholic Church allowed the small faith community to celebrate Mass in the traditional style of the 1850s. A bell was rung to signal that Mass was beginning, a tradition continued today. Fr Tom showed members of the congregation the vestments worn in this era and the custom of the celebrant facing away from the community throughout the Mass and members receiving communion over a rail at the front of the altar. Many of the younger participants were not aware of this practice of times gone by and were most pleased to be able to be a part of reliving history. The day was the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians, so Fr Tom explained the devotion to Our Lady and the use of rosary beads.

Sovereign Hill welcomed the enthusiastic congregation which included representatives from Damascus College Ballarat, Loreto College Ballarat, St Patrick's College Ballarat, Emmaus Catholic Primary School Mt Clear, St Alipius Parish School Ballarat East, St Francis Xavier Primary School Ballarat East, St Columba's Primary School Ballarat North and Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School Wendouree. Sue Crowe and Adam Cameron, dressed in 1850s clothes, provided the music and encouraged the singing and Jo-anne Van der Voort (Religious Education Officer) assisted with the preparation of the Mass.

The congregation was reminded that the diggers who flocked to the Ballarat Goldfields came here with hopes and dreams of a better life. Throughout the hard times their faith and their Church community continued to support and encourage them in good times and bad. Similar to faith communities today supporting the hopes and aspirations of its members.

Annemarie Kierce
Sovereign Hill Education Officer