



The staff of St Mary's Parish Ararat have never been busier. There is the weekly raffle for Mass on Sunday with ten lucky parishioners receiving invitations. Masses have been in the Parish Centre rather than the church and parishioners have enjoyed both the closeness to the altar and the warmth. Fr Andrew Hayes said, "We officially have the coldest church in the diocese but the warmest Parish Centre!"

The parish has also opened St Mary's Café during the lockdown. The parish employed a chef who had lost his job due to the lockdown. For two days each week Mike has been cooking up a storm with volunteer parishioners delivering care packages to parishioners and others who have been isolated in their homes. For many it was simply a welcome knock at the door and someone for a quick hello and then a welcome night free of cooking. Parish dynamo Joyce Clery worked with the Ararat Rural City to tick all of the boxes including obtaining a take-away license, so now the parish is selling lunches to the neighbouring school staffs and other locals. Joyce says, "The kitchen is a busy place, with the take-away lunches and dinners and the care packages. Parishioners have even been donating food to be turned gourmet. The next exciting possibility will be whether we can continue this when the lockdown ends."



*Fr Andrew Hayes – Parish Priest*