



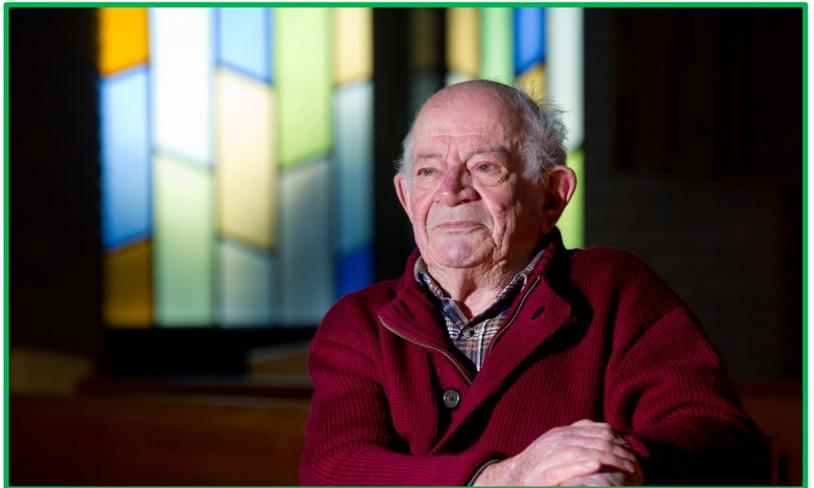
# Diocesan e-News

## CELEBRATING 60 YEARS IN THE CLOTH

When Fr Pat "Flags" Flanagan was ordained, it was a rarity for priests to celebrate sixty years in the cloth. However, he reached this achievement on Friday, July 24 as he celebrated a career that has seen him serve many parishes across the Diocese. "I'm glad I've made it," he said with a laugh. "I hoped that I would reach the year 2000. I think there are about six priests ahead of me in the Diocese who are all retired, aside from Fr Bill Melican, who is 65 years a priest."

Fr Flanagan now calls St Joseph's Parish in Red Cliffs home and said growing up in southeast Melbourne, priesthood was encouraged at school. "The idea of being a priest sort of just fitted me," he said. "It was held up as a very good thing back then."

He was ordained at St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne, alongside famed community worker and media personality "Father Bob" Maguire. Signing on for the Ballarat Diocese, Fr Flanagan's first posting was at Casterton, where he worked as assistant, before his first stint as Parish Priest in Maryborough.



He would later serve at other parishes, including Hamilton, Bungaree, Edenhope, Camperdown and Donald, before ascending north to Sunraysia after the retirement of local priest, the late Fr Frank Monaghan. "I knew nothing about the area when I moved here," he said. "I knew there were red grapes and green grapes. I had no idea Merlot was a grape - I just thought it was a drink."

During the early days of his career, Fr Flanagan said he saw the Catholic faith change with the Second Vatican Council. "All the bishops in the world were going over and meeting in Rome," he said. "That brought about a lot of change in the Church and then there started to be a reaction. Now, Pope Francis turned up and he's getting things going again."

Reflecting on his fondest moments of priesthood, becoming a scholar was at the top of his list. "I just liked studying and learning things. It's handy when you're preaching because it means you've got more to offer people." Now retired, Fr Flanagan still remains priest in residence at Red Cliffs and supports local priest Fr Thomas Matthews with services throughout Sunraysia.

He said that while COVID-19 had put a hold on some of his favoured duties, like visiting local students, he was glad to be able to visit people in their homes. Looking forward, he said his hope was to relocate to Maryborough, but that he was happy to remain in Red Cliffs as a "back stop" for the meantime. "The Bishop knows there should be two priests in Mildura and he'll do something about it when he can."

*Article by Teagan Bell and courtesy of the Sunraysia Daily*

**Fr Pat celebrated Mass for his 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his Ordination and you can watch it [here](#).**