



## THE JOYS OF EXPERIENCING LIFE IN OTHER PARISHES



Having “retired” last year from active parish life I made myself available to fill in for priests who were studying, on annual leave, on sick leave and other reasons. This has enabled me to meet many new folk and renew friendships I have made over some forty-four years in the ministry. It has also enabled me to visit and celebrate in parishes I had never visited before.

Over Holy Week I was supplying in Charlton, Boort and Wedderburn. Quite a lovely experience as I was celebrating in Wedderburn where my late great-uncle Mons. Jim Brophy served early last century. I felt sure his presence was there so I treasured those moments. By the way the congregation in Wedderburn increased by 100% from the year before. Last

year I had three in attendance on Holy Thursday! Things are looking up! When I was washing the feet of a young farmer in Charlton, he asked me if he could wash mine. What a deeply moving experience that was for yours truly as this was a first in my ministry. It brought home to me in a very special and moving way the significance of priestly service and how laity and priests are in it together. In a recent edition of the *Tablet* (19/3/16) Professor Thomas O’Loughlin wrote, *“The text of John is quite explicit: the purpose of foot washing is to help everyone in the community discover how they are to relate to one another as disciples. Each must be prepared to wash the feet of the other. It enacts the mutual relationship of service that constitutes our distinctive community, and is the practical face of the love we should have for one another. Foot washing has to move from being a quaint ritual – that can be dodged when inconvenient – to being a fulfilment of the Lord’s will for our behaviour when we gather together. It models what it is to be Church.”*



Charlton also is memorable for on Holy Saturday afternoon I was driven around the district in a red topless MG sports car. Another wonderful part of my time in Charlton was that one of the ladies very kindly gave me two home-made hot cross buns - a first for yours truly. What a joy it was to meet such generous and faith-filled people both in the church and in the community.

In early April I celebrated Mass in Hopetoun, Beulah and Rainbow. As I drove to Hopetoun I had to stop as I wasn’t sure of what I saw! There in the paddock were two lamas staring at me over the fence. Not having seen them as a pair or in a flock before I had to make sure I was awake and sober, even though I had had the extra hours sleep!

I then travelled to Rainbow for a Mass, which was something I had looked forward to as my paternal grandparents were married there over one hundred years ago. I was late and unfamiliar with the town layout so as soon as I saw the sign ‘Church’ I followed it.

The congregation was gathering and I spoke a few words with a lady parishioner about the age of the church as I thought St Mary’s would have been an



older church. I was told the church had been rebuilt after a fire about fifty years ago so I kept going. On reaching the sacristy I began to put on my alb and was about to enter the sanctuary to check everything and a gentleman took me by the arm and very courteously said, "I think you are in the wrong church, sir, as this is the Lutheran Church." What an embarrassment for me. I could not stop laughing as I left and found my way across the railway line to St Mary's. The Catholic parishioners thought it was a great joke. I am not too sure what the Lutheran's thought! No doubt my grandparents would see the funny side of their grandson's experience. Oh, the joys and tribulations of getting older and more forgetful as one travels the diocese.

*Fr Tom Brophy*

*Rainbow Church photo courtesy of Google Maps*